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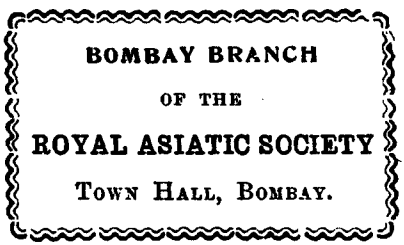

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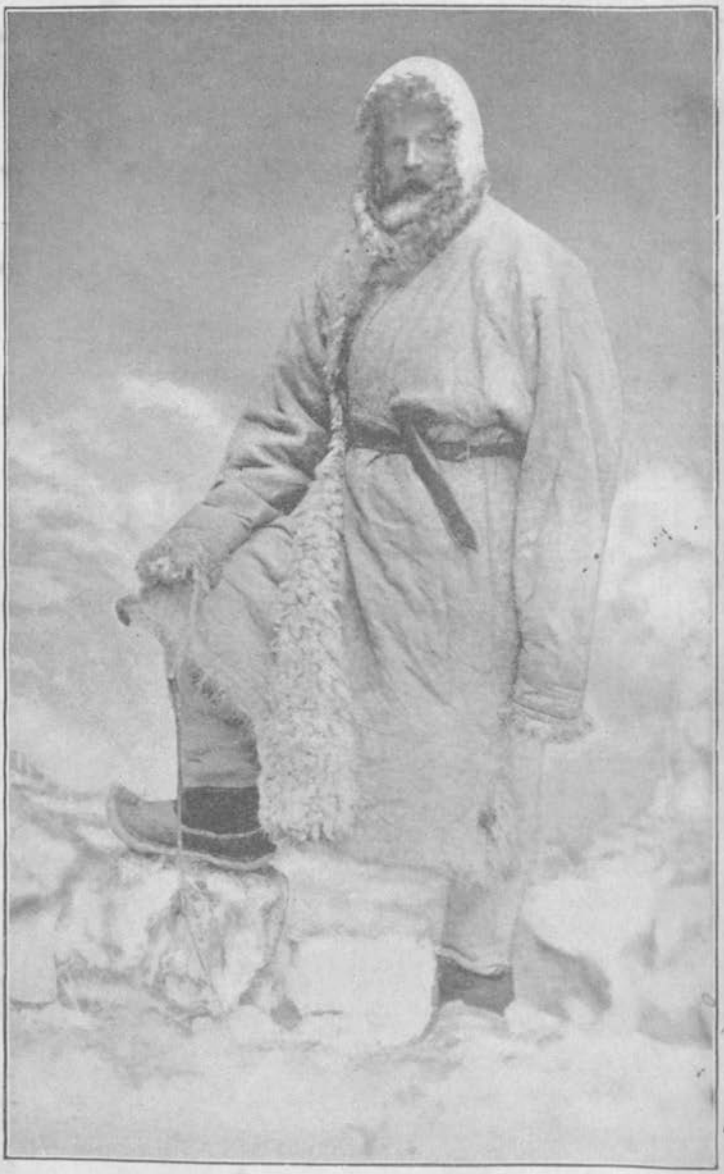

[*Frontispiece, Vol. I.*

LORD DUNMORE IN THE KIRGHIZ DRESS HE ALWAYS WORE ON THE PAMIRS.

THE PAMIRS;

BEING

A NARRATIVE OF A YEAR'S EXPEDITION ON HORSEBACK AND ON FOOT THROUGH KASHMIR, WESTERN TIBET, CHINESE TARTARY, AND RUSSIAN CENTRAL ASIA.

58667

BY THE EARL OF DUNMORE,
F.R.G.S.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1893.

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PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
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TO THE

MARCHIONESS OF LANSDOWNE,

WIFE OF

HENRY CHARLES KEITH, 5TH MARQUESS,
G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G.,

VICEROY OF INDIA,

THIS BOOK IS

GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THIS Diary, which was originally intended for private perusal, has at the request of many of my friends been put into the hands of the printer. It has no pretensions beyond being a faithful daily record of the wanderings of Major Roche and myself through Kashmir, Ladak, Western Tibet, Chinese Turkestan, and the Pamirs, and my subsequent journey alone through Russian Central Asia to the Caspian Sea.

I have studiously avoided, when writing about the Pamirs, giving any opinions on the political aspect of affairs, in that much vexed district, and have confined myself solely to recording what took place during the three months we were there. Of the civility we received from Russians of all ranks, I cannot speak too highly.

My thanks are especially due to His Excellency the Viceroy of India (Lord Lansdowne) for the valuable assistance he afforded me, and without which I could never have embarked in this expedition.

I am also deeply grateful to His Imperial Majesty the Czar of Russia, who most graciously accorded me his personal permission to travel through all his Central Asian dominions.

In writing about Ladak, many of my statistics are taken from Captain Ramsay's excellent little work, 'Speyra Ladaki,' and my thanks are due to Mr. Webber, of the Moravian Mission at Leh, for his kindness in initiating me into some of the precepts and mysteries of Buddhism, as it obtains in Western Tibet.

I can never forget the valuable services rendered to me by the Munshi Ahmed Din, the Interpreter, whom the Viceroy kindly placed at my disposal, and who accompanied the expedition from the Punjab to Kashgar, from April to Christmas 1892, much of the matter connected with the history of Kashgaria in Eastern Turkes-

tan, of the Sariq-qolis and Kirghiz tribes, being translated to me by him from those to whom we applied for the information.

To Mr. Macartney, the British Political Officer in Kashgar and Yarkand, we owe a deep debt of gratitude, not only for his kind hospitality to Major Roche and myself during our stay in Kashgar, but also for the assistance he rendered us in many other ways during the five months we spent in Chinese Territory.

In the course of my narrative I have made frequent allusions to the photographs taken by Major Roche. These included many scenes which had probably never been photographed before, and formed a very valuable collection, quite apart from their interest to us as illustrating various incidents of our journey.

After we parted company at Kashgar, and as Major Roche was returning to Kashmir, he was snowed up on the Boujil Pass, and suffered the irreparable loss of nearly all his negatives.

It would ill become me to close this Preface without paying a just tribute of praise to those

excellent and hard-working Ladákis, headed by Ramzan, who formed the *personnel* of the caravan and accompanied the expedition on foot for 2200 miles, crossing sixty-nine rivers and forty-one mountain passes, many of them being amongst the highest in the world.

DUNMORE.

LONDON,

October, 1893.

GLOSSARY.

AKOI . . .	A Kirghiz felt tent	*Turki.*
ARGHOON . .	Half Ladaki, half Yarkandi.	
BABU . . .	A clerk	*Urdu.*
BAGH . . .	A garden	*Persian.*
BHEESTIE . .	A water-carrier	*Urdu.*
BOURAN . .	A blizzard	*Russian.*
BUNDERBUST .	An arrangement	*Urdu.*
CARAVAN . .	Men and horses of an expedition.	
CHALMAH . .	White puggaree or turban . . .	*Turki.*
CHAPAN . . .	Quilted dressing-gown	*Turki.*
CHARPOY . .	Bedstead	*Urdu.*
CHERAI . . .	A steep ascent	*Urdu.*
CHOKIDAR . .	Night watchman	*Urdu.*
CHOTA-HAZIRI .	Little breakfast or early cup of tea .	*Urdu.*
CHUPPLIES . .	Kashmir sandals	*Kashmiri.*
COMPOUND . .	A garden or inclosure.	
DÂK	Post	*Urdu.*
DÂK BUNGALOW	Hotel or inn	*Urdu.*
DARIA . . .	A river	*Persian.*
DEGCHI . . .	A cooking-pot	*Urdu.*
DHOBEE . . .	A washerman	*Urdu.*
DOSTER-KHAN .	A present of fruit, &c.	*Turki.*
DURREE . . .	A coarse rug for tent	*Urdu.*
DURZI . . .	A tailor	*Urdu.*
EKKA . . .	A country dog-cart	*Urdu.*
GHARRI . . .	Four-wheeled trap, a cab . . .	*Urdu.*
GHEE . . .	Lard for cooking	*Urdu.*

Gombaz . . .	A tomb	*Turki.*
Goompah . .	A Buddhist monastery	*Tibetan.*
Halat . . .	A robe of honour	*Turki.*
Jampan . . .	A palanquin carried by four men .	*Urdu.*
Jigit . . .	A mounted messenger	*Turki.*
Jilga . . .	A valley	*Turki.*
Khansama . .	A cook	*Urdu.*
Khud . . .	A precipice	*Urdu.*
Kibitka . .	A Kirghiz tent	*Russian.*
Kilta . . .	Upright circular basket covered with leather	*Urdu.*
Kitmurgar. .	A waiter	*Urdu.*
Kul. . . .	A lake.	*Turki.*
Kurgan . .	A fort	*Turki.*
La	Pass	*Tibetan.*
Lama . . .	A Buddhist priest	*Tibetan.*
Mahdine . .	The female of ibex, wild sheep, &c. .	*Urdu.*
Maund . . .	80 lbs.	*Urdu.*
Medressé . .	A college	*Sart.*
Mullah . .	A priest	*Persian.*
Munshi. . .	A secretary	*Persian.*
Mussock . .	A water-skin	*Urdu.*
Nullah . .	A valley	*Urdu.*
Numdah . .	A felt blanket	*Urdu*
Pathan . .	An Afghan	*Pushtu.*
Perwana . .	An Indian passport	*Urdu.*
Peyrak . .	Ladaki women's head-dress . . .	*Tibetan.*
Poshtin. . .	A fur-lined leather coat.	
Puggarree . .	A turban.	
Pushtu . . .	Pathan language.	
Putties. . .	Bandages wound round the leg . .	*Urdu.*
Puttoo . . .	Kashmir homespun	*Kashmiri.*
Qol	A valley	*Sarigoli.*
Seer . . .	2 lbs.	*Urdu.*
Serai . . .	A public stable	*Turki.*
Shikar . . .	Game	*Urdu.*
Sobrania . .	A club-house	*Russian.*
Syce . . .	A groom	*Arabic.*
Tanga . . .	A coin worth 3½*d.*	*Turki.*

TARANTASS . .	Travelling carriage	*Russian.*
TCHAROOKS . .	Yarkandi boots	*Turki.*
TO LAY A DÂK OF PONIES .	To arrange for ponies to be sent on to various stages	*Urdu.*
TONGA . . .	A carriage on two wheels . . .	*Urdu.*
TOPEE . . .	A hat	*Urdu.*
TROIKA . . .	Three horses abreast	*Russian.*
TURKI . . .	Language spoken by the Kirghiz.	
URDU . . .	Common language of Hindustan.	
VODKI . . .	Russian brandy.	
YAK	Tibetan ox or cow, wild and tame .	*Tibetan.*
YAK-DAN . .	A bullock trunk	*Urdu.*
YAMBU . . .	A lump of silver worth 160 Rs. .	*Chinese.*
ZEMINDAR . .	Farmer	*Urdu.*

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THE PAMIRS.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival at Karachi—Lahore—Rawal Pindi—Chinese Passport—Pony Accident—Review of the Garrison—Hunza and Nagar Chiefs—Major Roche, 3rd Dragoon Guards, joins the Expedition.

February 12th, 1892.—Landed in India at Karachi after a very pleasant passage and left at once by the night mail for Lahore and Rawal Pindi. The next morning we lunched at Sukkur where there is a very fine cantilever bridge over the Indus, and on the 14th reached Lahore. As we had to wait there six hours for the Calcutta mail train going North we visited the fort, the palace of Runjud Singh and other places of interest, and continuing our journey at night reached Rawal Pindi the next morning and drove straight to the bungalow that M. had engaged for us on the Peshawar Road. The next four or five days were taken up with unpacking, during which time I put myself into telegraphic communication with the Viceroy (Lord Lansdowne)

respecting a permission from Pekin to cross the Chinese frontier, and I feel I owe him a deep debt of gratitude for the assistance he afforded me without which I could never have embarked on such a long and arduous expedition as the one before me.

February 19th.—Received a telegram from the Viceroy saying that my permit from the Pekin Government had been granted and that the document in question was on its way from China to Calcutta. The whole of the following week was taken up in making preparations for the expedition, purchasing tents, stores, etc., and procuring maps of Turkestan, and other parts of Central Asia, from Calcutta, where I also got most of the scientific instruments for taking various observations. Amongst other investments that I made was the purchase of a country-bred pony that fell with me the third day that I rode him, and rolling over me fractured one of my ribs. This delayed my departure a month. During the time I was confined to the house I wrote to the Foreign Office in London asking for a passport to enable me to cross the Russian Military frontier from Chinese Turkestan into Russian Central Asia. Also during this period of inaction I sent off all the heavy baggage to Kashmir in charge of some of my men.

March 4th.—Was allowed out for the first time since my accident and attended a review of all the troops in the garrison; and, as the parade ground was just behind

our bungalow, I was able to walk to the saluting post. The regiments forming the parade were the Horse Artillery, some Mountain and Field Batteries, the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 11th Bengal Lancers,* a Native Mule Battery, the 16th Bedfordshire Regiment, the 60th K. R. Rifles, the 78th Seaforth Highlanders, and the 30th and 31st Regiments of Punjab Native Infantry. General Sir W. Elles, K.C.B., had ordered this parade expressly for the benefit of the Hunza and Nagar chiefs and the Ponyalis and Kafirs who had recently arrived from Gilgit in charge of Surgeon-Major Robertson, Assistant Political Agent there. Some of these men were of high rank in their own country and a few of them had opposed us in the actions of last December 20th and 23rd, 1891.

These were pointed out to me by Surgeon-Major Robertson, who himself was present at both engagements which were so ably commanded by Colonel Durand, who was himself badly wounded in one of them.

These tribesmen had all surrendered unconditionally; and, instead of putting them to death or in prison for life (as they had expected), the Government sent them down into India to give them some sort of idea of England's power in that country, with a view to their returning to their native states and informing the hill-

* The 11th Bengal Lancers are the same regiment as that fine body of Irregular Horse raised and commanded by Major (now General Sir Dighton) Probyn during the Indian Mutiny, and known there as Probyn's Horse.

tribes how absolutely futile it would be on their parts ever to attempt to measure strength with such a power as that of Great Britain. Dr. Robertson was kind enough to take me round to the different carriages in which these individuals were seated; and I was presented to each in turn, commencing with Mahammad Akbar Khan, Rajah of Punyal, then to his two brothers, Fauladad and Sifhat, and to his nephew, Halibubah, who, I believe, is heir-presumptive to the throne of Punyal. In the next carriage were seated the Hunza men, who struck me, after conversing with them for a little while, as being more intelligent than the Punyalis. Khan Ali Bakhs, the interpreter, was our medium of conversation. These Hunza men were particularly fair, with pink-and-white complexions; but their hair, which they wore very long, was as black as night, and their features, taken as a whole, were decidedly of a Semitic cast. They claim to be descended from that portion of Alexander the Great's army which remained in the Hunza country and in the northern confines of Kashmir, when that great commander marched across the Indus some twenty-two hundred years ago.*

Excepting for their colour, these Hunza chiefs reminded me more of the Sioux Indians of the western prairies of North America than of any other race. Amongst the most prominent of them were Raza Beg, Afiat Khan, Luarra, etc. Immediately I addressed

* After conquering the Persian Empire, B.C. 331.

them they salaamed, and then stood up in their carriage, and remained standing all the time I conversed with them. They said that they were very much impressed with the British troops, as up to to-day they had only seen Goorkhas. After the march past I asked them which regiment they liked best, and their preference was divided between the Horse Artillery and the Highlanders. Another carriage contained the Kafirs, who were all as dark-skinned as the Punjabis, which rather does away with a theory put forward not long ago that the natives of Kafristan were a fair-skinned race like the Circassians.

When the parade was over, the General invited the occupants of all three carriages to come on to the ground and inspect one of the new long breech-loading 12-pounders; and after looking up and down the gun, inside and out, one and all took its measure with their fingers, evidently judging of its capabilities as an instrument of war by its length.

Dr. Robertson starts to-morrow with his charges for Calcutta. Not one of them has ever seen a railway train, a steamer, or the sea.

March 28th.—Major Roche, 3rd Dragoon Guards, has obtained a year's leave, and will join the expedition at Léh; so I have telegraphed to Lord Lansdowne, asking him to be so kind as to procure a Chinese passport for him.

CHAPTER II.

Attock — Bridge over the Indus — Peshawar — Pathans clever thieves—Fort of Jumrud—Khyber Pass—Fort Ali Musjid—Cabul Caravan—Return to Rawal Pindi—Foreign Office Despatch—Prince Galitzin, the Russian Explorer.

March 30th.—Went off to Peshawar alone, arriving there at 6 P.M., Roche having gone the previous day with his ponies, as there is a race meeting there this week. My objective point is the Khyber Pass. The country between Rawal Pindi and Attock is a wild, hilly desert with patches of scrub. At the latter place we crossed the Indus by a fine new bridge. The river is narrower here than in almost any other part, and, as it is joined close above Khairabad by the Kabul River, the current is very strong and rapid; and it rushes through its rocky sides, churning and foaming, as if impatient to reach the calmer atmosphere of the valley below. Attock is our military base for the Afghan frontier, and extensive works, covering some eighteen miles, were erected a few years ago; but after it was discovered that it would take about 200,000 men to man these defences, the area was considerably curtailed, and the forts more concentrated.

On arriving at Peshawar, I drove to the Deputy-Commissioner's bungalow, but found him absent on duty, accompanying the Lieutenant-Governor on the frontier. He had, however, kindly left orders that I was to be properly cared for until his return on the following day from the far end of the district under his jurisdiction. His district (Peshawar) is not a small one, containing, as it does, an area of several thousand square miles with a population of half a million. Its greatest length is eighty-six miles, from Kyara on the east to Spersang on the west; its breadth, from Kharkai in Jusafzai to Saddo Khel in the Khattak Mountains, being forty-six miles. It occupies, therefore, the extreme north-west corner of the British Trans-Indus Empire, extending, as it does, from the Indus to the Khyber. Cunningham states that "the capital of the district of Parashawar was called by the Chinese pilgrims Pulu-sha-pulu, or Parash-pura. The city was placed at three or four days' journey from the Indus, and near the south bank of a river." *

This he considers an exact description of Peshawar, which till the Emperor Akbar's time, A.D. 1556–1605, bore its old name of Parashawar, and as such is mentioned by Abu Rehan and the Arab geographers of the tenth century, Abu Fazal and Baber. Its present name signifies "advanced position." There is an old fort at the north-west end of the city called Bala Hissar, which

* 'Ancient Geography of India.'—*Cunningham.*

in old days was the fortified palace of the kings of Afghanistan. I tried to get a sketch of this old fort, but failed, as it is now so hemmed in by other houses.

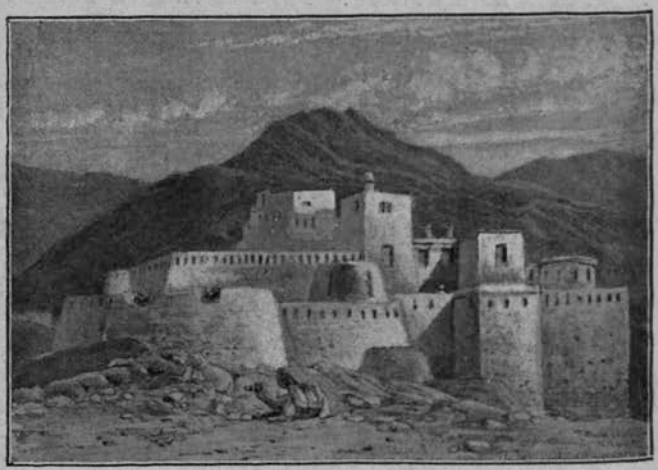
March 31*st*.—Mr. Merk, Deputy Commissioner, returned early this morning from Metanni, where he parted from the Lieutenant-Governor. In the early morning I strolled through the cantonments to explore their beauties. After the sandy plains of Rawal Pindi it was a great relief to the eye to see large shady trees, real grass lawns and flower-beds in some of the compounds. Passing along the "Mall" (every station in India rejoices in a Mall) I came to a cross-road called the Michnee Road, an avenue of shady trees with baskets of maidenhair and other ferns hanging from their lower branches, and on each side a broad strip of turf with flower-beds of different designs planted with roses, verbenas, geraniums, and various bright flowers. All this is simply the result of having an unlimited supply of water. Still, with all these many attractions, Peshawar has its drawbacks in that a large proportion of its population are Pathans, which is another name for the most audacious and daring thieves in the world. It is said of them that they are so light-fingered that they can steal the sheets off a man's bed when he is lying asleep on it, without waking him. They also steal the rifles out of the racks in the guard-rooms, and they carry on a fine trade with Afghanistan in con-

sequence. A rifle that only costs thirty-two rupees in India will sell for nearly ten times that price over the border, and some of the most daring thefts have been committed in consequence. Not long ago a stand of arms was stolen from the guard-room of the "Guides," and the sowars were put on the track of the thieves, but failed to make any arrests. The fact is these Pathans bury the rifles, and after a certain time has elapsed they take them by night from their place of interment and steal cautiously with them over the frontier. It was not till the other day that the police found out how long they actually did keep them buried before they transferred them across the frontier, and the discovery was made in this way. A Sowar while patrolling the road one night saw a figure stealing along carrying something suspiciously like a fire-arm in his hand. The Sowar challenged, and as the man ran away he fired at and wounded him, and on coming up to the place, found that although the man had managed to escape he had left the rifle behind; it was a Martini-Henry, marked on the strap D2. Therefore this rifle, instead of being one of the missing weapons taken from the Guides, was actually one out of a lot that had been stolen from the 2nd Devonshire, a regiment that had left Peshawar three years previously, and yet it was only now that they were digging up the rifles and attempting to smuggle them across the frontier.

In the afternoon I met Colonel Warburton, command-

ing the Khyber force. He informed me he had made all arrangements for an escort to-morrow to see us safe up the Khyber Pass as far as the Fort of Ali Musjid.

April 1*st*.—We started at 6.30 A.M. The party consisting of Colonel Newell, political agent in charge of Ayub Khan,* Roche, Ryder, and Scott, all of the



JUMRUD FORT, ENTRANCE TO KHYBER PASS.

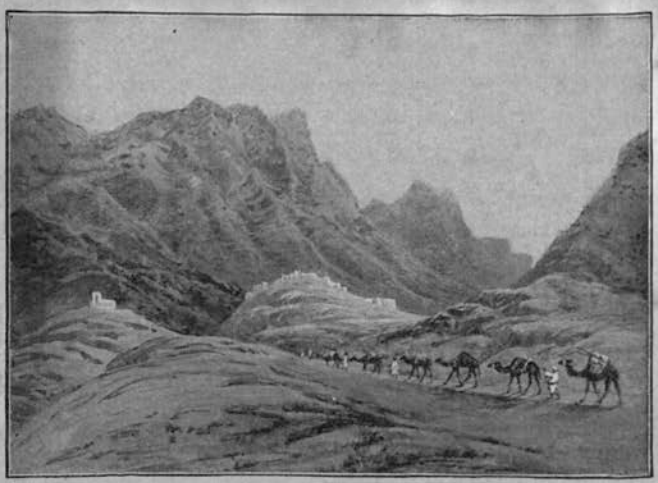
3rd Dragoon Guards, and myself. At 8 we reached the Fort of Jumrud, at the entrance to the Khyber Pass, where we found our mounted escort awaiting us. These Sowars of the Khyber force are a very smart body of men, and their uniform is as becoming as it is

* Younger brother of the deposed Yakub Khan, late Amir of Afghanistan.

serviceable. A sort of half-tunic, half-blouse of kharkee, red cummerbund and brown riding boots complete their kit, and for arms they carry a carbine (Snider) and sword. On the head they wear an Afghan conical red cap with blue and grey puggaree, the same as worn by the 11th Bengal Lancers. Very early this morning Colonel Warburton had despatched a small force of Khyber Rifles (infantry) to clear the hills and rocks on each side of the Pass of Afreedis, and as we went along we came upon double sentries, every three or four hundred yards, who presented arms to us as we passed. Having been supplied with fresh horses at Jumrud, we entered the famous Pass, replete with memories of the Afghan war of 1878, and after about two hours' journey we found ourselves under the walls of the Fort of Ali Musjid. The road we travelled along was a fairly good one, though precipitous in places, but well planned considering the difficulties the engineers must have had to contend with. All along the road, on every commanding eminence, was a small fort containing a picquet of the Khyber Rifles. These so-called forts are all built on the same pattern, viz. a Martello tower without a door, but with a sort of open window high up off the ground, into which the soldiers climb by means of a ladder, which is drawn up after them. At the foot of the rock or detached hill which rises precipitously from the right bank of the Khyber stream was a nice green, shady spot where we elected to take our tiffin,

and immediately above us, crowning this rock, towered the Fort of Ali Musjid, that cost many a poor fellow his life in the assault on 22nd November, 1878. Here it was that Major Birch and Lieutenant Fitzgerald fell while leading the 27th Native Infantry.

The fort is overtopped on the east, north, and south-west by the stupendous cliffs and spurs of the Rhota's



ALI MUSJID, KHYBER PASS.

and Chinagai Sir; on the south ridge, commencing from the right, are Forts Fitzgerald and Birch, and below these, overlooking the stream and the Ghalanai Valley, are Forts Mitchell and Bluff, while south-west, some 350 yards from Ali Musjid itself, on a detached spur from the Chinagai Sir, stands Fort Sam Browne (*sic*),

named after the gallant officer who commanded the assault. All these so-called forts are really only picquet towers, except Ali Musjid itself, which is capable of holding an entire regiment.

Having rested ourselves and our horses, we called up our escort and started on our return journey. About half-way down the pass we met a large caravan nearly half a mile in length. These were Cabulese traders and small merchants, returning to their native city, escorted by a very strong detachment of the Khyber Rifles; their camels were laden with rock salt, iron bars, and various European goods. Accompanying this caravan were a great number of women and children, not by any means prepossessing to look at, but picturesque in their uncouth wildness. The Fort of Jumrud was reached in safety, and repossessing ourselves of our old horses we made Peshawar before dark.

April 2nd.—Busy all the morning buying gold that will pass in Central Asia, I managed to get about 180 Tillas* and about 100 Russian Half Imperials.† This gold I procured from various Afghan merchants, who have dealings with the Russians in Central Asia. In the afternoon I returned to Rawal Pindi, where I found an official document from the Viceroy informing me of the views held by the Foreign Office regarding my

* A tilla is a Bokharan gold coin worth between 11*s.* 6*d.* and 12*s.*

† I paid 12·10 annas for the half Imperials.

attempting to cross either the Chinese or Russian Central Asian Frontiers, but as the despatch was marked "confidential," I am not at liberty to disclose its contents.

The "Younghusband incident" is evidently still fresh in the memory of the Downing Street officials. I was introduced to and had a long and interesting conversation with the Russian traveller, Prince Galitzin, who arrived in India last year by way of Kashmir, Western Tibet, over the Karakoram Pass from Chinese Turkistan, and Russian Central Asia. In the evening I dined with General Luck, Inspector-General of Cavalry, where I had the pleasure of meeting H. E., The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, V.C.

April 5th.—Received a telegram from the Viceroy saying Major Roche's Chinese passport had been granted by the Government at Pekin, and the document was already *en route*.

CHAPTER III.

Departure for Kashmir—Walk to Murree—Ayub Khan—Severe Drought — Kohala — River Jhelum — Baramula — Kashmir House-boats — Sopoor — Vale of Kashmir — Munshi Bagh — Captain Trench, Assistant Resident — City of Srinagar — Emperor Akbar—Origin of East India Company.

THE next few days were taken up in preparations for a start, and on the morning of April 9th we left Rawal Pindi for Kashmir, reaching Tret that night late. The next morning I rose at 4.30, and started off on foot to Murree, by a mountain path, leaving the others to follow in Tongas. My track lay through a forest of pines, much resembling the scotch fir in stem, colour and texture of bark, but lacking the wild grace and fantastic growth of its limbs and branches. Immediately after sunrise the cuckoos began to make themselves heard. My coolie, whom I had hired for eight annas to show me the way across the hills, would make a fortune in Europe at any Turkish bath establishment as a "Masseur," for when I sat down to rest, he immediately commenced to manipulate the calves of my legs after the most approved rules of "Massage," which refreshed me considerably, as I was much out of condition, having

been laid up with a broken rib for a month, and this was my first walk; I also suffered severely from thirst, every spring being dry, and there was not so much as a puddle of water to be seen. However, after a walk of five hours and a half, ascending from 3200 feet to an altitude of 7700 feet or 4500 feet in fifteen miles, I reached Murree, the great hill station of the Punjab.

MURREE.

After having taken rooms in a bungalow named "Braemar," I went out to look about me, and the view I saw from the hill above our bungalow was simply too magnificent for words. To the north lay the stately snow-capped Himalayas, to the east the range known as the Pir Panjal, and second only to their Himalayan

brethren in magnificence, and to the south the plains of the Punjab.

April 11th.—Met Colonel Newell again, with whom I had arranged that before leaving Pindi I should call on Ayub Khan, but unfortunately the fast of Ramazan had begun, and no Mahammadan cares to receive visitors in the daytime during that month, as they mostly sleep all day and eat and drink all night. I should have liked to have seen this grandson* of old Dost Mahammad, Amir of Afghanistan, who made himself a world-wide reputation for his cruelties. He was the happy father of thirty-two sons, the eldest of which was Shere Ali, against whom we made war in 1878 in consequence of his refusing to receive an English mission after having received a Russian one. Him we conquered and deposed, and in his stead placed on the throne at Cabul his son Yakub Khan. The treacherous massacre of the gallant Cavagnari and the officers and personnel of his mission, is still green in the memories of all Englishmen, and another punitive expedition, which resulted in a second Afghan war, was undertaken by the British Government, the result being that Yakub Khan was defeated and fled, and his brother Ayub Khan, sometime governor of Herat, is now an honoured guest of the Indian Government at Rawal Pindi.

* On my return to India in March, 1893, I made Ayub Khan's acquaintance through Major Jennings, the political officer in charge.

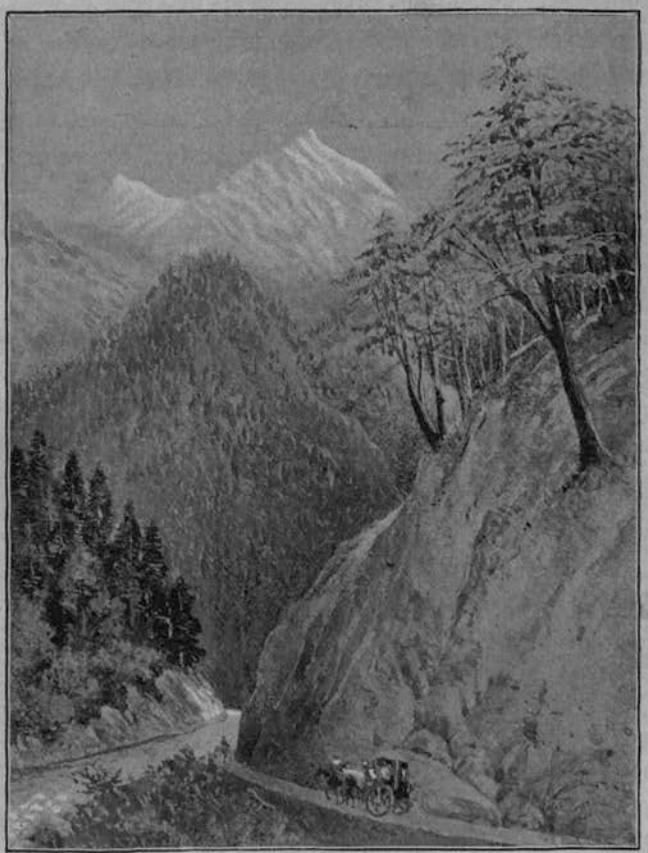
April 13th.—This place (Murree) is suffering severely from drought. Water is selling at 4 annas a mussock and officers from Pindi and other stations on the plains are up here busy laying out plans for cholera camps, in anticipation of the dread disease making its appearance owing to the great drought.*

April 18th.—Left Murree for Kohala, where we crossed the Jhelum River.† After leaving Kohala we drove through a pass, on the left bank of the river, that resembled in every detail the Pass of Killiecrankie in Atholl, more especially the tunnel in the rock through which the road runs, to the left of which and below it, the Jhelum falls into a circular rocky pool exactly in the same way as the River Garry does, just below the Highland Railway Tunnel, before reaching the station of Killiecrankie. The hills on each side clothed with dwarf oak, birch, etc. made the resemblance complete. Dolai was reached at sunset and we remained there the night in the Dâk Bungalow, that was, I believe, named "Honeymoon Lodge," by Lady Ripon. Dolai was very hot, as we have come down over 5000 feet from Murree;

* Four months after this passage was written the cholera made its appearance in Murree and carried off many Europeans as well as natives.

† The Hydaspes of the ancients. The river takes its name from the city in the Punjab beneath which it flows. In Kashmir it is called "Behat," a contraction of the Sanscrit Vitasta, which the Greeks altered slightly to Hydaspes.

altitude, 2520. This was our first night in Kashmir. Next day we halted at Chakoti; altitude, 4200.



ON THE ROAD TO BARAMULA.

April 20th.—After a lovely drive in tongas for seven hours, through gorgeous scenery, we reached Baramula.

Our road lay through a forest of deodara, chennar,* Turkey oak, sycamore, silver birch, *Pinus cembra*, ash, and Spanish chestnut; while amongst the smaller trees and bushes I noticed the Rowan, or mountain ash, a species of hibiscus with a small red flower, a blue flowering laurustinus, a lilac with a lovely gossamer flower, oleanders and white may in profusion; the ground being carpeted with fennel, creeping vines, honeysuckle, purple and white iris, wild roses, buttercups, a pink fluffy flower, name unknown, jessamine, yellow heather, white broom, and maidenhair ferns *ad libitum*. The perfume of these wild flowers, together with the odour of the pine forest, was most delicious. Scarcely had we had time to gather a few flowers before down came a terrific storm upon us, that threatened to overturn our tongas. We however contrived to reach Baramula in safety, but our first entry into the Happy Valley might have been under more propitious conditions. Here we expected to find our tents and heavy baggage, but half of the things, including our tents, had been forwarded to Srinagar, consequently we had to sleep in the boats. At 3 P.M. we embarked in six boats for the capital, which we hope to reach the day after to-morrow, as we

* The chennar is the principal hard-wood tree of Kashmir. It resembles the sycamore more than any other tree. It has a beautiful leaf, resembling a man's hand, with the thumb and four fingers spread out. It grows to an enormous size, one specimen I measured was thirty-seven feet nine inches in circumference, six feet from the ground.

cannot go far to-night owing to the wind. These Kashmir boats are very comfortable, being about sixty to seventy feet long, and ten feet beam, tapering to a point in stem and stern. The afterpart of the boat is quite shut off and is the home of the boatman, his wife and family.

In my boat I had a crew of four men, the captain being familiarly known as the "Demon." His wife was a very pretty woman. I had always heard that the Kashmiri boat-women were celebrated for their beauty; but, barring Mrs. "Demon," I saw nothing to excite one's admiration amongst any of the others. The system of locomotion is varied. Sometimes the men paddle (in deep water), sometimes they punt with a pole; but, whenever they can, they tow from the shore; meanwhile one of the women steers from the stern with a heart-shaped paddle. The boats are roofed in with matting, which is strong enough and thick enough to keep out any amount of rain or sun; in fact, they are very cool and dry.

From the eaves of the roof there hang "chicks," or falls of matting, which reach to the bulwarks, and serve as walls, or, if rolled up and tied, serve as windows. The boats are flat-bottomed, like a Thames punt, and a good breeze of wind would capsize them in a minute. The boatmen do not, therefore, fancy crossing the Woolar Lake except very early in the morning, as generally a strong breeze rises at noon. The fact of

their having their wives and families on board is a great safeguard to the traveller, as it makes the boatmen doubly cautious. At 7 P.M. we tied up for the night to the left bank of the Jhelum.

April 21*st*.—Started early for Sopoor, which we reached at 7.30 A.M. Bought a basket of fish for breakfast for the large sum of one anna (one penny) the lot. At Sopoor there is a small town built on each side of the river, connected by one of those quaint bridges common to Kashmir. This bridge spans the river just at the entrance to the Woolar Lake, and is supported by piers composed entirely of undressed logs of pine and cedar wood. The lowest layers are the broadest, and diminish gradually as they rise to the centre of the pier above, when they again expand in the same proportion as below, so that the uppermost logs, on which the bridge rests, are exactly of the same length and dimensions as the lowermost, the centre logs being only about half the length of the upper and lower. This gives the bridge a ricketty look; but, in point of fact, these bridges are very strong, and remain standing during the inundations, when many of the houses on the shore are swept away by the floods. I went ashore for a little while, accompanied by one of the State agents, who, together with two chuprassies, had been sent by Mahammad Afzun Khan, the Governor of Kashmir, with the boats to meet us at Baramula yesterday.

Sopoor we left at 8.30, and, avoiding the Woolar Lake, arrived, by a side-canal, at Shadipur in the afternoon, again on the waters of the Jhelum. The day had been cloudy and cold, with occasional heavy showers. We tied up for the night at Sumbal, under the shelter of a beautiful grove of chennar trees, whose branches overhung the river. Here, to our great astonishment, we met all the Hunza and Nagar people, who were on their way home, *viâ* Gilgit, accompanied by the interpreter, Khan Ali Bakhs. They recognised me at once, and I had a long talk with them, hearing from them all they had done and seen in India since I parted from them at Rawal Pindi on the day of the Review.

April 22nd.—Left Sumbal at 4 A.M. The day broke bright and glorious, and at last we realised that we were in the beauteous Vale of Kashmir, about which we had heard so much. Magnificent snow-clad mountains were all around us, and the happy valley lay smiling in the sunlight. This great territory of Kashmir covers an area of nearly 80,000 square miles, and the valley, which contains some 4500 square miles, stands at an elevation of 5300 feet above the sea-level. Tradition avers that the entire valley was once a large inland sea, fed by the drainage of the Western Himalayas, the Pir Panjal, and other minor mountain ranges, which surround it, but that, owing to a vast pressure of snow water from the glaciers upon some of the weakest points of the

mountains, a passage was forced through a gorge, and this immense body of water, once let loose, rushed unchecked through the country, until it reached the plains of the Punjab, leaving behind it, as evidences of its former existence, the Woolar and Manisbal Lakes, the Jhelum and other rivers. The early history of the country is also entirely traditional. One writer gives five thousand years as the age of one of the Hindu temples erected at Avantipore, in honour of Surya, the sun-god; whilst another authority, deeply versed in archæology, insists on deducting 3500 years off the computation of the former. Supposing the former authority to be correct in his estimate, these Hindu temples must have been built during the Pandu Dynasty. The contemporary history of the country and its rulers, during this century, cannot fail to be of interest to all Englishmen who take a pride in the vast possessions of our Empress-Queen in the East. So recently as the year 1819 Kashmir was entirely under Afghan rule, in which year Runjeed Singh and his army of Sikhs invaded the country, and, driving out the Afghans, conquered it.

Twenty-seven years afterwards * Golab Singh, one of Runjeed Singh's commanders, entered into negotiations with the English, the *pourparler* taking place at Amritsar, in the Punjab. The result of the negotiations was as follows :—

* After the battle of Sobraon in 1846.

Golab Singh was to pay to the British Government 75 lakhs of rupees (£750,000) on condition that the said British Government would appoint him Governor or Viceroy of Kashmir, he pledging himself to acknowledge England's supremacy. During the Indian Mutiny of 1857 Golab Singh was as true as steel to his masters the English, and despatched Kashmiri troops into India, who fought most gallantly side by side with the English before Delhi. Soon after the quelling of the mutiny, Golab Singh died, and was succeeded by his son Ranbir Singh, who was given the title of Maharajah of Kashmir. He was gazetted a General in the British Army, a Grand Cross of the Star of India, and a Councillor on the occasion of Her Majesty's being proclaimed Empress of India.* Ranbir Singh died in 1885, when he was succeeded by his son Pertab Singh, the present ruler of the State of Kashmir.

As we proceeded up the river and approached within a few miles of the capital, we were met by several boats belonging to merchants and dealers in different wares, the majority being silver and coppersmiths, and workers in blue enamel, who boarded us and spread all their goods out for our inspection. In fact they were very difficult to shake off, and ended by becoming a positive nuisance. I evaded them by going ashore with

* On the 1st of January, 1877, I had the honour to be on duty at Windsor Castle, and was present when Her Majesty was proclaimed "Empress of India."

the Khansama, who was about to purchase eatables for dinner. I stood open-mouthed listening to the Kashmir prices. He bought a fair-sized sheep for three rupees eight annas (*4s. 2d.*), a large earthenware jar, as big as a moderate-sized soup tureen, full of delicious honey in the comb for one rupee, and several other minor requisites at equally ridiculously small prices. Soon after this a swift boat belonging to one Bahar Shah, shawl merchant and banker (as he styles himself), came to meet us, bringing our letters and newspapers. I embarked on the small boat and was paddled quickly up the river, through the city, until we reached the Munshi Bagh, where I disembarked and proceeded to choose a site for our camp, in which I was more than ably assisted by Captain Trench, Assistant-Resident in Kashmir, who had kindly come to meet me. We selected a shady spot under some large trees, but failed to get the tents up in time that night, so when the others arrived, they had to sleep one more night on board their boats. Next morning, thanks to Captain Trench and his officials, we got the camp into pretty good shape, and hired four Kashmiri cows, whose combined efforts in the milking line resulted in about a quart and a half of milk per diem. After lunch I went down in my small boat, with an awning up, and six paddlers, to have a look at the city and its bazaars, and I must say I never saw such a ramshackle lot of dilapidated-looking tenements in my life, as the houses on each bank of the river, still, I

believe some writers have compared Srinagar favourably with Florence! To my mind it is what a very dirty Venice *might* look like after a severe shock of earthquake. There are no streets in the towns on either side of the river, only the narrowest of lanes, therefore, the one main artery of the city is the river. Being the one and only thoroughfare, it is crowded and thronged with boats all day long, and the principal merchants have all their shops on the river, as are all public buildings, Governor's house, Maharajah's palace, Mosques, Hindu temples, etc. The towns on each side of the Jhelum are connected by seven bridges, which are of the same structure as the one I described at Sopoor.

The weather is dull and cold, and we are longing to see the sun again. We certainly ought to, unless the place belies its old name of "Surjyanagar," meaning "City of the Sun." Opinions differ considerably regarding the age of Srinagar. Some writers say it was built in the year of our Lord 60. Others again declare it was not founded until early in the 8th century. Nevertheless, it has been for many years the seat of government of the rulers of Kashmir. Overlooking the city is a picturesque old fort, built by the Emperor Akbar in the 16th century, into which no Mussulman is allowed to enter as it contains a Hindu temple and some sacred idol. There is an inscription on the principal gateway, written in Persian, in which it sets forth that the walls of the fort were built in the year

1590, by the aforesaid Emperor Akbar, whose name crops up so frequently in North-West Indian and Kashmir history, that it is almost worth while to devote a page to him and his deeds, for during his reign he effected greater improvements in his Civil Government than any other king of India. Akbar belonged to the royal house of Timur (Tamerlane), he being the eldest son of Humayan, son of Baber, son of Sheik Mirza, and sixth in descent from Timur. He was born in A.D. 1542, and at fourteen years of age he mounted the throne of India, which country he ruled for forty-eight years, dying at Agra in A.D. 1605. As a military commander he showed great abilities, and was perpetually engaged in warfare. He subdued Bengal in 1575, which up to that time was under the rule of Afghan kings. In 1586 he conquered Kashmir, in A.D. 1591 he conquered Sindh, and in A.D. 1594 he recovered Kandahar, so that in Hindustan proper the only chief that remained unsubdued was Udi Singh, Rana of Udipur, who fought Akbar, thereby losing his capital, but still retaining his independence. In A.D. 1601, Khandesh was conquered and annexed, and this last acquisition completes the long list of Akbar's wars and victories. He was a sober and abstemious man, fond of religious and philosophical arguments. He built the fort at Attock and the citadels at Agra and Allahabad. "Akbar," says Ferishta, "had never less than 5000 elephants and 12,000 stable horses, besides vast hunting

and hawking establishments. The greatest displays of grandeur took place on the king's birthday, when he was weighed in golden scales, against silver, gold, perfumes, and other substances in succession, and these were afterwards distributed amongst the spectators." In 1583 an Englishman named Fitch, with three other adventurers, visited India, taking with them letters of introduction from Queen Elizabeth to the Emperor Akbar. Fitch was much struck with the splendour of the court and the magnitude and wealth of the cities of Hindustan. It was the information gained from this visit that no doubt in a great measure opened out to English merchants the hope of a lucrative commerce with India." *

* Hughes' 'Outlines of Indian History': "It was in the reign of Queen Elizabeth that the First East India Company was formed, with a capital of £30,000, to open up trade with India, and in the year 1600, a charter was obtained from the said sovereign, and in 1601 the first venture, consisting of five ships, sailed for the East."

CHAPTER IV.

Captains Younghusband and Bowers' horses—Chinese Passport—The Tsungli Yâmen's despatch—Cheap wages and clothing—Brahmins and Brahminism.

April 24th.—Unpacked all the rifles and guns to see that none had suffered in the three weeks' journey in bullock-waggons. Found the lever spring of my paradox broken. Got a very clever Persian armourer to repair it. Spent the morning looking at baggage-animals with Captain Younghusband. Saw six of his own that he had had in the Pamirs, but they were in such poor condition I would have nothing to do with them. There was one bay horse I fancied, and he turned out to be the one Captain Bower rode when tracking down the murderer of Dalgleish, but, historical as the horse was, I could not purchase a bag of bones.

Returned to the Residency with Younghusband, and spent an hour poring over his maps of Turkestan, Pamirs, etc., and after receiving much valuable information from him returned to my camp.

April 25th.—My Chinese passport arrived here to-day from Simla. It is an extraordinary looking docu-

ment, and is accompanied by its English translation and also by a copy of a letter, addressed to the British Minister Plenipotentiary in Pekin, by the Tsungli Yâmen. The translation of the passport is as follows:—

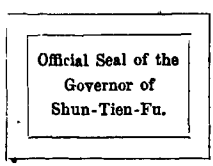
The Tsungli Yâmen in the matter of issuing a passport.

The Yâmen had the honour to receive a note from Sir John Walsham; in which his Excellency states that he has recently received a telegraphic communication from his Excellency the Viceroy of India, to the effect that the Earl of Dunmore, a British subject, proposed starting from India on a journey through Chinese Turkestan, including the region of Yarkand, taking with him several Indian servants. Sir John Walsham requested that a passport might be furnished. As in duty bound the Yâmen have prepared this passport, which bears the seal of the Governor of Shun-Tien-Fu and forward it to the Earl of Dunmore to be retained by him. In addition to writing officially to the Governor of the Province, the Yâmen hereby call upon all the local officials along the line of route, where the Earl of Dunmore passes through their jurisdictions and produces his passport for examination, to examine it forthwith and allow him to proceed on his journey, to afford him the protection stipulated for by treaty and not to hinder nor obstruct him in any way.

Important! Important!

A necessary Passport to be delivered to the Earl of Dunmore, a British subject.

Kuang Hsü 18th year 1st month 22nd day.



Note.—At the termination of the journey this passport should be returned for cancellation. If lost or mislaid, the document is valueless.

Then comes the despatch from the Tsungli Yâmen to Sir John Walsham, British Minister at Pekin.

(Translation.)

Kuang Hsü xvii—5—2.

The Prince and Ministers of the Tsungli Yâmen have the honour to address Sir John Walsham on the following subject. In January, 1888, they received a communication from His Excellency, asking that a passport should be issued to Major Cumberland, who was going from England to India, and proceeding from thence to travel in Chinese Turkestan. In April of the same year, Sir John Walsham, in a second communication, requested that passports should be granted to three gentlemen, named Harvey, Lennard and Beech respectively, who were passing over from India by way of the Tsung Ling Range * of mountains, and were going to travel in the neighbourhood of Yarkand. The Yâmen issued the above passport and duly notified the local authorities. They are now in receipt of a communication from the Governor of the New Dominions, in which he forwards a joint report that has been submitted to him by the district officers of Su-le, and other departments—Major Cumberland and two English gentlemen, named Beech and Lennard, had, they stated, arrived at different times within the district under their jurisdiction. Cumberland and his party went away finally last year and returned to their own country. Beech and Lennard, ever since they entered the district last year, had travelled by unfrequented routes, and had explored the hills in search of game. Their movements were quite uncertain, and it was not known whether, or when, they had left the country. Turkistan is a country of immense extent and contains deserts and mountainous fastnesses where there is no trace of human habitation and where travellers are exposed to innumerable dangers from wild beasts and other causes, against which no effectual precaution can be taken. The treaties provide for the protection of foreigners travelling under passport in the interior, but make no mention of the pursuit of game. In 1875 the British Consul at Shanghai, Mr. Medhurst, asked permission for foreigners to travel in the

* Chinese name for the Karakoram.

interior for the pursuit of game, and the question having been referred by the Southern Superintendent of Trade to the Tsungli Yâmen, it was, after due consideration, forbidden by the latter. There are many objections to foreigners going into the interior in the pursuit of game, especially in the case of Turkestan, which is a remote district with a mixed population, and cannot be considered in the same light as other parts of the interior. Should any unforeseen mishap occur, the Governor asks on whom the blame would devolve, and begs that a communication should be addressed to the British Minister, asking His Excellency to issue instructions for the discontinuance of the practice. The Yâmen begs to observe that passports granted for purposes of travel are limited in duration to thirteen months from the date of issue, on the expiration of which they become invalid. The object of the despatch from Turkestan is to point out the great difficulty of protecting people who penetrate into the hills in pursuit of game, in a country whose position is so remote and whose population is of such a mixed character. Major Cumberland has already left the country and his case needs no further consideration. The movements of Beech and Lennard have been so fitful and uncertain that it is not known whether they have returned home. Their passports, however, have expired and must be considered as cancelled. As the matter is now over, it requires no further notice, but the Yâmen would feel obliged if Sir John Walsham would be good enough at his convenience to ascertain whether Beech and Lennard have returned to their own country, and if not, they hope His Excellency will warn them against continuing the pursuit of game.

The Prince and Ministers avail, etc. (translated by J. N. Jordan).

Immediately after perusing the above I went to see Lennard, who happens to be here on his way home, and showed him this letter. He was much amused at the interest the Pekin Government took in his movements and welfare, but he agreed with me that it was sent as a broad hint that I was not to go to the Pamirs. There seems no doubt that if Roche and I get to Yarkand we

shall probably not be allowed by the Chinese authorities to go on there, for rumour has it that a Chinese force has been despatched to oppose the Russian advance in that country, so what is to be done is the great question, which time only will solve.

April 26th.—Visited the Hunza and Nagar chiefs in their camp here, accompanied by Trench's Munshi, Ahmed Din, who interpreted for me in Persian. In the afternoon I came to an agreement with some Baltistan men regarding baggage-ponies. They agreed to supply twenty ponies to Kargil, ten marches from here, for 100 rupees, including six men and forage. This is much cheaper and quicker than coolies. This evening the Durzi came to measure my men for Puttoo suits for the march. I had previously bought 120 yards of beautiful grey homespun tweed, made of good Kashmir wool, for forty-eight rupees, or sixpence a yard. It is as good as the best cloth we make in Harris, at four shillings a yard. The Durzi's charge for making up a full suit, viz. shooting-jacket, waistcoat, and knickerbockers or riding-breeches, is 1½ rs. (under 2*s.*). Each man gets a suit of Puttoo—one blanket, 4 rs., two pairs of Putties, 10 annas; two pairs of chupplies (sandals), 2 rs., as far as Leh; and, for those who are going to cross the Karakoram, and accompany me into Chinese Turkestan—a Poshtin coat, and two pairs of fur-lined mits, and a pair of Pappachs and Tcharooks

(felt-lined boots and stockings) in addition. Things are certainly not dear in Kashmir, nor are wages high. In my boat I have a crew of five men. The hire of the boat, including crew (who feed themselves), is 15 rs. a month, or eightpence a day. Provisions also are cheap; fowls at 3½*d.* or 4*d.* apiece; eggs, six for 1*d.*; a sheep from four to five shillings, etc.

Beef is unknown in this country, as it is strictly against the law to kill cow or ox, these animals being sacred to the Hindu, who, nevertheless, is so wanting in humanity, that, although he will not kill any animal of the Bovine race, yet there are no creatures in the world whose sufferings can compare with those of the labouring cattle of Hindustan.

* * * * * *

I do not know the exact proportion of Hindus to Mussulmans in Kashmir. I suppose it is in about the same ratio as it is in other parts of India, the Hindus being about seven, to one Mahammadan. Almost every other man one meets here has the distinguishing mark of his caste (Brahmin), viz.: a splotch of yellow paint between the eyebrows, just over the top of the nose, which is renewed every day after morning prayer. The dress of the Hindu, as seen here, differs very little from that of any other native. Two pieces of white cotton stuff, one round the loins and tucked up between the legs, part hanging down like a kilt to the knee; and the other piece thrown in careless, but not ungraceful

folds over the shoulder, is sometimes used as a hood. The women's dress is much the same, only longer in the cloth, and bright colours as well as many ornaments, are affected by them.

Amongst the multitudinous rites and ceremonies connected with the Hindu social system, perhaps none are so peculiar as those which are performed in conjunction with births and marriages. The shaving of a child's head at an early age must be performed with due ceremony, and the investiture with the Sacred Thread, when the child is grown up, is the most important of all. In old days the Hindus had eight forms of marriage, seven of which are now obsolete. One of these was the tying together the bride and bridegroom's hands with a blade of sacred grass; another consisted in the bride stepping seven steps, and when the seventh step was completed the marriage was indissoluble.

The Brahmin religion, of which Buddhism is generally considered an offshoot, is a form of Monotheism pure and simple, and is contained in the Vedas, four in number, which date back, roughly speaking, some 3000 years; the manifestations of this unique deity being represented by three minor deities, viz.: Brahma the creating principle, Vishnu the preserving principle, and Siva the destroying principle. The Brahmin religion is also contained in the celebrated "Institutes of Menu," a code of rules and precepts, dating back to the ninth century before

Christ. In these codes are laid down the four castes of the Hindu social system: (1) The Brahmins; (2) the Kshetryias; (3) the Veisyas; (4) the Sudra. The first, sprung from Brahma's mouth, was considered the chief of all created beings. The duty of the Kshetryias or military caste, which sprang from Brahma's arm, was to defend the people; and the Veisyas, who sprang from Brahma's thigh, were the agricultural and trading caste, while the Sudra, sprung from Brahma's foot, were the servile caste, whose duty it was to serve the other three. Brahminism is also contained in the Puranas, or eighteen Scriptures.

The Hindu deities are innumerable, amounting to hundreds of thousands, but their recognised gods, seventeen in number, are those invariably worshipped up to the present time. The Vedas, the Institutes of Menu, and the Puranas, were all written in Sanscrit, the word in Sanscrit signifying "refined"; and Sir William Jones describes the language as "of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either."

This same authority, in an essay written for the Asiatic Society as far back as 1784, drew a very interesting and instructive parallel between the gods of the Indian and European heathens, pointing out the resemblance between the popular worship of the ancient Romans and Greeks and that of the Hindus. While he maintained that the Gothic system, which prevailed in

the northern regions of Europe, was "not merely similar to those of Greece and Italy, but almost the same, in another dress, with an embroidery of images, apparently Asiatic. From all this, if it be satisfactorily proved, we may infer a general union or affinity between the most distinguished inhabitants of the primitive world at the time where they deviated . . . from the rational adoration of the only true God."

The writer then commences to draw his first parallel between the Roman god Janus and the Hindu god Ganesa, quoting the two choriambic verses from Septimius Serenus:—

> "Jane pater, Jane tuens, dive biceps, biformis,
> O cate rerum sator, O principium deorum!"
>
> "(Father Janus, Guardian Janus, thou two-headed and two-formed deity,
> Oh, sagacious planter of all things and ancestor of the gods!")

Janus was the Roman god of light, or of the sun, represented on old coins with two heads.

Ganesa is the Hindu god of wisdom, painted as in the accompanying plate with an elephant's head as the symbol of sagacity, and attended by his favourite rat, which the Hindus consider as a wise and provident animal. The ancient Romans offered corn and wine to Janus. The doors of their houses were called Janua. Januarius was considered the first month of the twelve, whence the whole year was supposed to be under his guidance.

वरुणो यादसामहम् VARUNA

ब्रह्मा देवानामुत्तमः BRAHMA

इन्द्रो नाम अस्मि नाकपतेः INDRA

सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः CARTICEYA

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुः VISHNU

वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् CUVERA

SIX HINDU GODS.

[To face p. 39, Vol. I.

Ganesa, the Hindu Divinity, has precisely the same character and attributes. All religious ceremonies, addresses, or compositions in writing are begun by pious Hindus with an invocation to Ganesa—a name composed from Isa, the leader, and Gana, a company of deities.

Saturn, the oldest of the Pagan gods, was, according to Plato, the god of time; and he, along with his consort Cybele, were the children of Ocean and Thetis; and Ceres,* goddess of harvests, was their daughter. "If we produce, therefore," says Sir W. Jones, "an Indian king of divine birth, eminent for his piety and beneficence . . . . we can safely offer a conjecture that he was also the same personage with Saturn." This was Menu or Satyavrata, whose patronymic was Vaivaswata, or child of the sun, and whom the Hindus believed to have reigned over the whole world in the earliest age of their chronology. According to Roman mythology, Jupiter was a descendant of Saturn.

The Hindu god Indra, or the king, answers fully to his description; but still, with all his power, he is considered as a subordinate deity to the Hindu Triad, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, who are the same forms of one and the same god-head: Brahma with the power of creation, Vishnu with the power of preservation, Siva with the power of destruction.

* If Ceres was the mythological daughter of Saturn, the Hindus also have a Goddess of Harvests, called Lacshmi, the daughter not of Menu (the supposed prototype of Saturn), but of Bhrigu, by whom the first code of sacred ordinances was promulgated.

The first operations of these three powers are variously described in the different Puranas by a number of allegories, "and from them," the same writer says, "we may deduce the Ionian philosophy of primeval water, the doctrine of the mundane egg, and the veneration paid to the Nymphæ, or lotos, which was anciently revered in Egypt, as it is at present in Hindustan, Tibet, and Nepaul."

It is seated on the lotos-leaf in the midst of an abyss that Brahma of the four heads is generally represented.

Vishnu is represented, in some places, as riding on the Garuda, or eagle, whose body is that of an imaginary bird and the face that of a beautiful boy.

Siva is believed to have three eyes; and as, according to Pausanias, a statue of Zeus was found at the taking of Troy with a third eye in his forehead, we must conclude that the Zeus of the ancient Greeks and the Siva of the Hindus are identical.

Varuna is generally represented as crowned and kneeling on the back of an alligator.

Carticeya of the six crowned heads and twelve arms, the hands grasping javelins and swords, is represented as riding upon a peacock.

Cama is more often seen sitting on a divan, crowned and holding a bow and arrows.

Rama also holds a bow, and is represented sitting cross-legged on his throne.

Krishna, the darling god of all Hindu women, is,

when he appears amongst the Avatars, more splendidly decorated than any, and wears a rich garland of flowers adorned with strings of pearls. He is supposed to be the Apollo of ancient mythology.

Surya, who answers to Phœbus, the sun-god, is represented in a chariot drawn by seven horses. He is supposed by the Hindus to have frequently descended from his car in human shape, and to have left a race of mortals on earth.

There are many other Hindu deities, but these above-mentioned are the only ones of whom I have come across pictures or images.

CHAPTER V.

Mahammad Afzun Khan, Governor of Kashmir — Death of two English Artillery Officers—Sempill of the Seaforth Highlanders, wounded by a Bear—Great fire in Srinagar.

April 27th.—Received a visit to-day from Mahammad Afzun Khan, Governor of Kashmir. He seems a superior sort of man, and speaks excellent English. After thanking him for his courtesy in sending a State official and boats, etc., to meet us at Baramula, our conversation turned into a more serious channel, and I was initiated into the mysteries of Kashmir politics.

In the evening I went to see Trench, who is down with fever on board Kennard's house-boat, which is more luxurious than many a bungalow. Trench gave me a Lhasa (Tibetan) dog—such a little beauty! I have named her Hlamo, which is Tibetan for goddess. At present she is but a round ball of fluffy hair, with a most comical little face and the sweetest little tail imaginable, which curls right over her back. She is only two months old.

April 28th.—After a heavy gale of wind, that bid fair to level all the tents in the Munshi Bagh with the

ground, the morning broke fair, and by noon the sun was very hot. About 2 P.M. we had a severe dust-storm, which, however, was mere child's play to a Rawal Pindi one. The most absurd rumours regarding our expedition are flying about the bazaars here, and have come to the ears of some of my caravan people. One of my servants, whose real name is Fyza Bakhs, but who rejoices in the name of "Fireworks," asked, with a very grave face, if it was true I was going to be away *six years!*

April 29th.—One of our tents was broken into last night, but nothing stolen. Reported the circumstance to Younghusband at the Residency, and he has ordered a guard to watch the tents at night. Cholera has broken out in the city.

May 1st.—The body of an English officer of Artillery, who died yesterday at Shadipur, was brought up to-day in his boat. Diphtheria is said to be the cause.

May 2nd.—As I was rummaging about this morning in a Parsee store-keeper's shop, buying a few extra stores, I came across a large tin hermetically sealed, on which was a label entitled "Berkeley cheese," 8 lbs. I need hardly say I immediately became the proud possessor of it. I must surely write to Fitzhardinge and tell him his cheeses have found their way even to this out of the way part of the world. It shall be reserved for some great occasion, such as the death of the first "Ovis Poli."

May 3*rd.*—Another funeral to-day, of another Artillery officer—Lieutenant O'Leary, belonging to a mountain battery in Burmah. He came to Kashmir for his leave, took typhoid up the Sindh Valley and was brought in here more dead than alive. He never rallied, but succumbed at once. None of the natives who brought him in knew who he was, and there was nothing to identify him, except his name on his leathern belt. Serious strike in the food bazaar. The Bunniahs, having sole control of their own corn and rice for the first time, have agreed amongst themselves to lock it up and refuse to supply any one, gentle or simple, in order to put the price up. Consequently all our men and horses are starving. Younghusband and I went down to interview the Governor on the subject, and a store will be started to-morrow, where provisions for men, and grain for horses, can be procured at the old prices. Met Prince Galitzin, who says he will be off to-morrow, as he has thirty horses standing here, and he can get no barley for them.

May 5*th.*—Sempill, of the Seaforth Highlanders, was brought in to-day, having been badly mauled by a black bear on the Pir-Panjal. He told me he was just getting to the top of a ridge when he heard a low growl as it were close to him, so, seizing his rifle from the hands of his shikari, he ran up to the crest of the ridge, and, as the bear happened to be doing likewise, they met literally

face to face on the top within four yards of each other. Sempill had just time to fire, when the bear sprang on him, and knocking him down, fell on the top of him, and they both rolled down the precipice together; Sempill fell backwards, making two revolutions, head downwards, the bear meanwhile holding on to his head with one paw, while the claws of the other were firmly embedded in his left cheek, just below the eye. When they reached the bottom of the Khud, and Sempill came to, the bear was lying stone dead along-side of him. It was a narrow escape, and he got off very cheap, having no bones broken and merely these two flesh wounds.

May 7th.—A disastrous fire broke out last night in the city, raging all night, on the right bank of the river. From our camp the flames of the burning city were so very distinctly visible that we thought at first it must be the Residency burning, so close did the fire appear to us. The whole sky, for miles round, was lit up with a lurid glare, and as it was blowing a gale at the time, we could see the flames rushing on before the wind as they ruthlessly licked up everything in their path of destruction. We went down early in a boat this morning, as the fire was raging as furiously as ever, there being no means in the city for extinguishing it.

A more piteous sight I never before witnessed, or such wholesale destruction, the city being built almost

entirely of wood. The second bridge was burnt right through, thus cutting off from the poor people in the burning quarter all chance of escape except by boat. For a considerable distance between the second and third bridges, there was not the vestige of a house left standing; naught but a heap of smouldering ruins, including one Hindu temple and a Mahammadan mosque. Just opposite the finest Hindu temple in the city, the gale drove the flames over the river till they reached the outworks of this sacred edifice, which were burnt to the ground. They managed to save all the main body of the temple, whose beautiful silvery*-looking roofs, with their gilded cupolas, escaped unhurt. The house in which Younghusband and I had interviewed the Governor, two or three days ago, was also burnt.

But the scenes enacted on the banks of the river were the most painful. The population seemed to have gone mad. Big strong men raving and being held down by their friends or relatives. Women shrieking and screaming, as only a Kashmiri woman can, wringing their hands and gesticulating wildly at the fire; crowds upon crowds of men, women and children surging to and fro, one huge helpless affrighted mass, on the landing-steps all down the river; while others seemed so paralysed with the great ruin that had so suddenly

* I confess I lost all interest in the silvery roofs, when I discovered they were made of the tops and sides of petroleum tins, nailed on the rafters, and deftly fitted by some cunning slater. I came across many such amongst the ruins that day.

overtaken them, that they had relapsed into a sort of comatose state of apathetic indifference.

The whole scene was not lacking in grandeur, although, like everything else, it had its grotesque side as well as its tragic. For instance, I saw one man, whose house was blazing over his head, calmly sitting at his open window pouring water on to some burning wood beneath him out of a teacup.

But the grandeur of the whole scene was enhanced by the breaking of a terrific thunderstorm over the devoted city, just at the same time as Colonel Neville Chamberlain brought up his big guns, and put them into position, to bombard a certain part of the city, with a view to making a clean breach between the burning houses and those as yet untouched, thus preventing the fire from spreading, otherwise the whole city must have been burnt to the ground. The storm now turned to a deluge of rain, yet it seemed to have no effect upon the fire, except to raise great columns of black smoke which were blown hither and thither, the sport of the gale. I shall never forget the lurid look of the flames in the daylight, against that leaden sky, and the bursting of the thunder-claps, the glare of the forked lightning, the roar of Heaven's artillery contrasting with the puny noise of Chamberlain's terrestrial guns, as they belched forth their shot at the houses doomed to destruction, and in the intervals the shrill shrieks and cries of a half-maddened population.

However, everything must have an end, and by nightfall the fire was to all intents and purposes kept under control, so that all fear for the safety of the rest of the city was at an end. But it was no thanks to the people of the city that the fire was stopped. The natives did absolutely nothing. The fire was arrested, kept under, and eventually extinguished by Europeans, and mostly by Englishmen.

May 9th.—The damage done by the fire is computed at twenty lakhs of rupees, and 5000 houses, mosques and temples have been destroyed.

CHAPTER VI.

Start for Léh—A Stampede—Glorious Moonlight Effect—Bad Water—A lying Shikari—Sonamerg—News of Bear—The Zoji-la (Pass)—Matayan—Dras.

May 10*th.*—Started off for Léh, where Roche is to join me a month later.

My caravan* consists of nineteen men and twenty horses, including my own riding pony, called the "General."

Hardly had the baggage animals been loaded up, before one of them got frightened by a cur yelping at his heels, when off he went full gallop. This was a signal for a general stampede, and away broke the whole lot, careering madly through the Munshi Bagh, tumbling over tent-ropes, and spilling the baggage. It took some time to find them again, and I rode about to see what damage was done to the baggage, and came upon one horse lying on his back, with his legs up in the air, and underneath him were my guns and rifles. I need hardly say that this animal was selected to carry my rifles, as being the quietest and most well-behaved of the lot. I

* In Asia the word "caravan" is used to describe the horses and men attached to the Expedition, and does not mean a "waggon," as it does in civilized Europe.

examined each gun-case, and found that, luckily, there was no damage done.

In less than an hour every horse was caught and reloaded, and sent off to Gunderbal. I went by water across the Anchar Lake and up the Sindh River by daylight; but the moon was well up when I reached Gozerbul, and the effect of the moonlight on the broad waters of the Sindh, overshadowed as it is here on both

FROM GUNDERBAL, LOOKING BACK.

sides by lines of immense chennar trees, was very beautiful. From the lake up to Gozerbul the river flows through the very best of green pastures, dotted all over with sheep, cattle, and horses. I passed through three or four very well-to-do-looking villages, evidently belonging to these pasture-lands. Leaving my boat at Gozerbul, I walked in the moonlight to my camp at Gunderbal, about two miles up the Sindh Valley. The

night was so warm and the moon so bright that I dined outside my tent without candles.

May 11*th.*—Up at 5.30, and started ahead of the caravan with my gun. Walked for three hours through a likely-looking bit of low scrub, which ought to have held game; but, with the exception of two chikore and

KANGAN.

one quail, which I shot for the pot, I saw nothing, excepting a most beautiful white bird, like a large bird of Paradise, with a long tail; but I had not the heart to shoot the poor thing. Arrived early at Kangan, crossing the Sindh by a wooden bridge. Made two sketches; scenery simply sublime. *Altitude,* 5380 ft.

May 12*th.*—Last night I went for a little walk, to

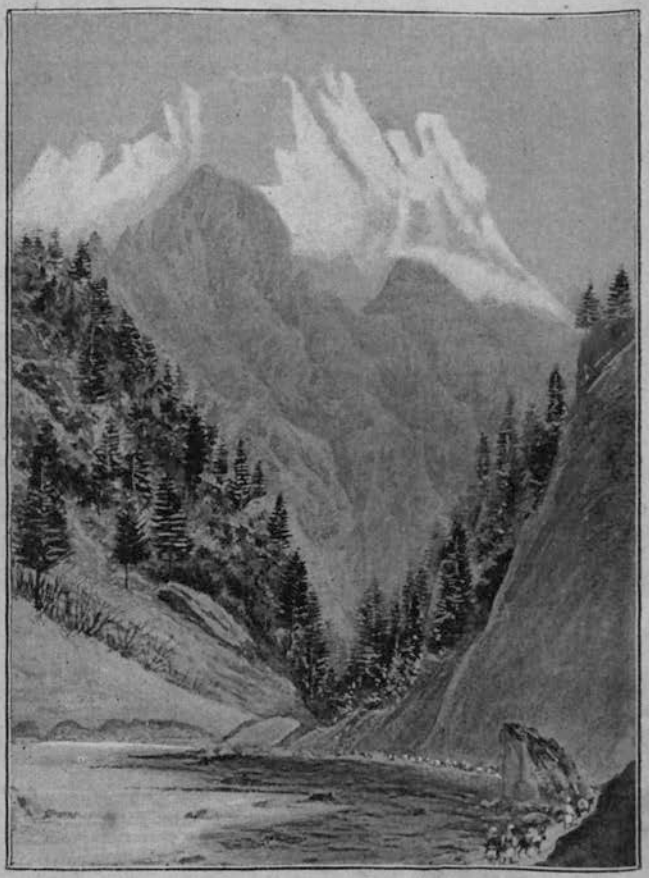
see the moon rise over the shoulder of the hill. She was at the full, and the transcendent beauty of the scene is far beyond my powers of description. Sitting down on a slight eminence overlooking the valley, I gazed in awe-stricken wonder at the glorious scene as it became, bit by bit, unfolded before my eyes. Below rushed the ever-restless river in full flood, bearing on its surface the snows of the past winter, now melted by the warm May sun; and, as the moon appeared over the shoulder of the hill, I could clearly trace the river's sinuous turns, glistening in the soft light like the coils of some gigantic silver serpent. On each side of the valley the hills sloped down in graceful outline to the little plain that skirted the river. These were richly clothed with pine, deodara, and chennar, the full, deep colouring of whose foliage, tinged, as it gradually became, with a soft edging of tremulous light, gave to those silent woods the appearance of a mass of velvet-like undulations. On a ridge facing me stood several dead giants of the forest, silent witnesses of many a like scene, their weird limbs in quaint, fantastic shapes, standing out in bold relief, sombre and gaunt, against the soft, pearl-like sheen of tender light in which the middle distance of the valley was enshrouded. Beyond those, and rising abruptly above the slumbering vale, towered, in all their majesty and pride of loftiness, the rugged and precipitous mountains of the Daghowan and Nagraram Ranges. Peak after peak became visible as the moon

rose higher in the heavens—lightly kissing their whitened summits and gently touching with her soft beams the snow wreaths that had until now lain hidden in the many clefts and crannies that scored the mountain side. Then the silence of the night seemed scarcely broken by the breath of an almost imperceptible light air, like the passing of an angel's wing, as if Nature herself must fain whisper her tribute of praise and acknowledgment of the omnipotence of the great Architect of the Universe.

At 6 A.M. this morning I struck my camp and marched up the Sindh Valley to Rewel, without any occurrence worth recording. In the afternoon I selected a lovely spot for the tents in a grassy glade overshadowed by large walnut-trees. We have been imperceptibly on the ascent, as the altitude registered on my aneroid this afternoon is 7450 feet, as against 6200 feet yesterday at Kangan. The heat was intense to-day. To-night it is pouring rain.

May 13th.—Had a bad night with a touch of fever. Found out afterwards from an officer who camped on the same spot, and was likewise taken ill in a similar manner, that it was the water. There was a spring of the most pellucid-looking water close to the camp, in fact, it was mainly owing to the presence of this delicious-looking spring that I chose that place for my tents, and, being very thirsty and hot on arriving after

a long walk, I took a copious draught, and have suffered in consequence.



HANGUE SOTA.

I started notwithstanding my indifferent health and crossed the Sindh twice before reaching Gagangair, which

GAGANGAIR.

[*To face p. 54, Vol. I.*

is a most lovely spot, with green grassy glades overshadowed by splendid chennar and walnut trees, sloping down to the river, whose banks are carpeted with wild flowers. Passed several droves of ponies, all laden with bark, and driven by very queer-looking men, with pigtails and a strong Mongolian cast of countenance, from Western Tibet. For some miles our path lay through a forest of pine and spruce, amongst which I noticed some very fine specimens of the *Abies morinda*. I also saw some hydrangeas in flower near the river, and the creeping Cotoneaster. I stopped for an hour at a spot called Hangue Sota, where I made a water-coloured sketch, and in less than an hour after was riding across a snowfield, for I could not so far insult a glacier as to call this miserable whitey-brown relict of an ancient avalanche by such a fine name. There were half a dozen of them on each side of the river, varying from twenty to one hundred acres, and one dirtier than the other. They extended a good way up the mountain-side, and are evidently used by the natives as lumber slides, as the snow is covered with twigs, broken branches, leaves, mud and dirt. They look as if they must have been there for years, some of them being quite honey-combed, and reaching half-way across the river, like a broken bridge.

The cold was now becoming severe, and on consulting my aneroid I found we were at an altitude of 9050 feet, and as a bitter north-east wind met me straight in the face when I got to the head of the valley, I began to

think it was about time for my poshtin. It was now tiffin time, and as I had had nothing to eat since 7 P.M. last night, I began to feel the pangs of hunger; but I contented myself with a captain biscuit and some cold tea, and while I was enjoying the same, two ponies passed me laden with Ibex heads, only one of which, however, was worth the shooting. I asked the man in charge the name of the Sahib who had shot them, and the locality, also if he had killed any more. "Chhabbi Sahib" (26), answered the man with an assurance that would have made Ananias turn green with jealousy. I said nothing, but recalled to mind an observation made by our bearer at Pindi, when discussing the Kashmiri's character for truth. Kassim's denunciation was somewhat sweeping—"Plenty liar man in Punjab," said he, "but one Kashmiri man dirty time more big liar man than hundred Indian liar." I began to agree with him and feel the force of his remark after my conversation with that Kashmiri Chota Shikari.

After a very cold ride through "mist and snow," it "grew wondrous cold," and I began to feel it, like Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner'; but at length Sonamerg was reached, and a more miserable-looking hole, viewed through the medium of a snow-shower, I have seldom seen, or at any rate I thought so at the time. It poured with rain all night and was bitterly cold, and as I was rather ill and half-perished with cold, Sonamerg has no pleasant associations for me.

May 14th.—A lovely morning after a fearful night of wind and sleet and snow. The hills all round the white valley are covered with fresh snow. A bad look out for the day after to-morrow when we have to cross the Zoji-la (Pass). I had to wait some time until the sun got warm enough to dry the tents, as wet tents are a heavy load for the poor horses.

Met an officer of engineers on his return to India; he had had very little sport, but he told me that a brother officer of his had only three weeks ago killed two bears off the path that I am about to follow to-day to Baltal, and that on arriving at the latter place he went out in search of more, and killed one and wounded two more.

Started about ten o'clock when the tents were dry, and marched through a very bare country. We have left the Sindh valley and its glorious woods and grassy glades behind us, and now nothing but snow and stunted pine and bare rock meet the eye. Now and then are high bare slopes of very inferior-looking grass, and, with the exception of a few horses grazing, no living animal is to be seen.

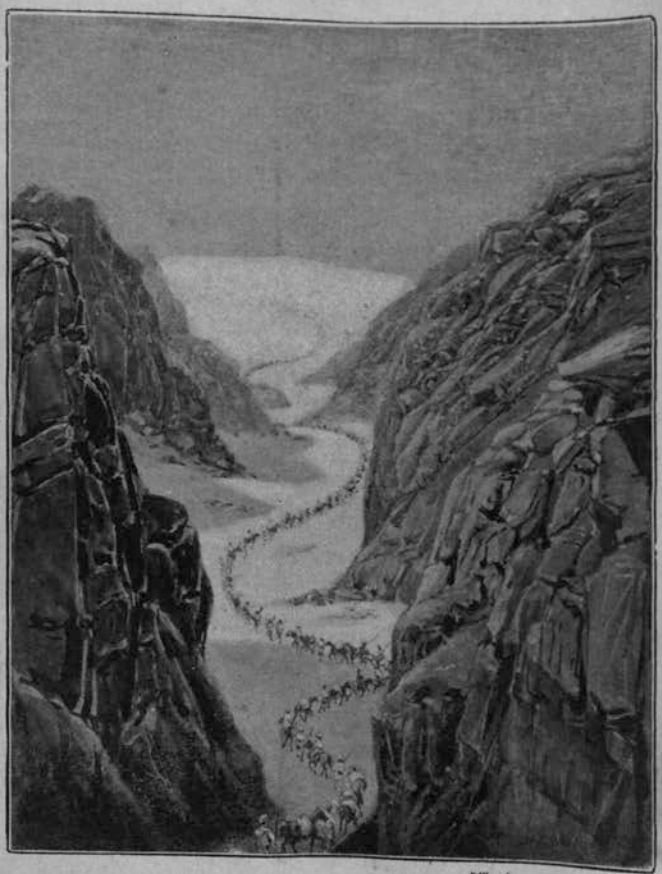
Coming along the path I met a procession headed by a fine-looking man in semi-uniform on horseback, followed by a retinue of servants, in the middle of whom was a Jampan with a purple hood, carried by four Jampanis, inside was a lady. This was the native Deputy Commissioner going to take up his new post at Gilgit. We exchanged the usual courtesies of the road

and passed on, arriving at Baltal in time to find the bears were not at home to me, as I never saw even a track before nightfall.

Found the Thanadar of Dras and six men and some horses waiting for me at Baltal; they had come over in consequence of the heavy snowstorm to help my baggage-animals over the Zoji-la (*la* means pass) to-morrow. These officials have a curious fashion when first greeting you. If it happens to be in their own town or village, they offer you tribute in the shape of flour, rice, dried apricots, nuts, etc., of which you accept two or three handfuls and it is then removed. But on a journey or away from their own houses, they offer you tribute in the shape of money. This thanadar offered me five rupees. I just touched the money with my finger in the palm of his hand, and making a sign to him to take it away he pocketed it. This is called in India "touch and remit."

Boulaki, the cook, has broken down. I went to see him, and told him he was not fit to cross the Zoji-la to-morrow, and so before he had time to get ill, I took one of the thanadar's ponies and a coolie, and putting him on the road sent him off back to Srinagar. I heard months afterwards that he was one of the first victims to cholera there.

May 15*th*.—Struck the tents early, as to-day was to be a long one. We were in the pass by 6.30 A.M., and



[To face p. 59, Vol. I.

CROSSING THE ZOJI-LA PASS.

very arduous work it was going up such a steep incline in the snow, for riding was absolutely out of question. How those wretched little baggage-animals managed to get along at all with their loads was a wonder. In a short time the sun was well up, and the reflection of its rays off the snow would have been positively blinding

EAST END OF ZOJI-LA PASS.

had we not been provided with snow goggles. One English officer*—the thanadar told me—had crossed last week unprovided with spectacles, and he suffered afterwards from snow blindness. When we got to the

* It was Captain Orr-Ewing, 16th Lancers, whom I met afterwards at Lucknow in April, 1893.

top of the pass, to my immense astonishment, I heard a cuckoo singing, as I was not aware that those birds frequented such high altitudes. I took the height of the pass when I fancied I was at the top of it and my aneroid pointed to 11,520 feet. After marching for close on nine hours we reached Metayan, where we camped for the night.

May 16*th*.—After a very cold night with a piercing wind we started for Dras. The country we passed through, though bare, was very beautiful and reminded me more and more of my own home in the Western Isles of Scotland. In fact, this morning, on coming suddenly upon the village of Pandras, I could almost fancy myself at home. The hills around were of the same colour and of the same physical configuration, with the same russet grassy slopes, broken here and there by wild and rugged rocks. Ponies, small wiry little fellows with long unkempt manes and tails, were feeding on the hill-side, amongst black-faced sheep and little shaggy black cattle. Every available strip of earth between the rocks was utilised for cultivation, just like our "lazy beds," and the larger pieces of cultivated ground much resembled our crofts, with the same multitudinous small heaps of stones gathered off the land and built up in little piles, having been turned up in the process of delving with the Kashmir hoe, which much resembles the "cas chrom" of the

BALTAL, KASHMIR.

[*To face p.* 61, *Vol. I.*

West Highlands. Each little garden was surrounded by a dry stone dyke, and within it a fringe of willows from which are cut the wands to make the baskets which the women carry here on their backs with loads of different sorts. The gardens, the dykes, the willows and the creels (baskets) might all have been in the Western Hebrides, and the dress of the women is identical with that of their Highland sisters. What in the Highlands is termed the "mogan," or footless stocking is here the tight Kashmiri trouser, fitting close to the leg and finishing just above the ankle, leaving the foot bare, and the dress or kirtle tucked up to allow free use of the limbs, when working in the fields, is identical in both countries, also the creel carried on the back by both races completes the similarity of the picture. But when I came to look at the houses all resemblance ceased. Here each man's house is a little fortress, perched upon some rock or commanding position, flat-roofed and destitute of any surrounding garden.

At about 3 P.M. on reaching the crest of a ridge I looked down upon the large basin of Dras, as it is called in Kashmiri. In old days it was a western district of Western Tibet, and its Tibetan name is Hem-babs, signifying "snow fed," or "snow descended," and this name is descriptive of its most striking peculiarity as the most snowy district in this part of the country. Cunningham says that "it owes this peculiarity to the great depression in the Himalayas at the head of the Dras river,

which allows the constantly humid vapours of Kashmir to pass to the north of the mountains, where they become condensed by the cold and are precipitated in rain or snow, according to the season of the year."

In the centre of this basin flows the river, on the left bank of which stands the old fort, a square, not wholly unpicturesque building on a slight eminence, with four round towers, one at each corner, and smaller towers flanking some outworks, the whole structure being loopholed for musketry. To the north lay some orange-coloured hills, this curious tinge being given to them by the enormous quantity of iron water which has for centuries flowed over the rocks and stones which form their surface, and when the sun shines brightly upon them the effect is very curious. On the south lay a range of high rugged cliffs mostly covered with snow, on the west lay the country we had just travelled through, and to the east more high snowy peaks and wild-looking mountains, over which we still have to pass before reaching the Baltistan frontier. On arriving at the fort, which is manned by a guard of Kashmiri soldiers, a non-commissioned officer came out to meet me, while the guard turned out and presented arms, that is to say, one soldier half-dressed got out of a window and stared at me, while another soldier quite dressed ran out of the gateway of the fort and came to the "present," but about the band, which no doubt played an appropriate air of welcome, the less said the better.

DRAS, KASHMIR.

[*To face p. 63, Vol. I.*

It consisted numerically of three performers, one of whom beat madly and regardless of time on two tom-toms, while two other youths of tender years vied with each other as to who could make most noise on a weird and melancholy sounding instrument of a class infinitely lower and much less musical than the old pan pipe of the Punch and Judy man.

After a few words with the non-commissioned officer in charge of the fort, I rode on (I always mount my pony when nearing my camping-ground, as it looks more dignified than arriving on foot), and selected a charming spot for the camp near a running stream, and as I was expecting a mounted messenger from Captain Younghusband with an important telegraphic despatch from the Viceroy, and felt, moreover, that I required some rest and quiet after my indisposition, I resolved to remain a whole day at Dras, which day would be devoted to letter-writing, sketching, washing dirty clothes, and resting the baggage-animals. No sooner had my tent been pitched and I was seated outside, than the Tesseldar of the place arrived, bringing with him the usual tribute, the offerings being contained in three brass dishes, viz. almonds, dried apricots and nuts. *Altitude*, 10,280 ft.

CHAPTER VII.

A Game of Polo—The Game of Chaogan A.D. 1210—Appointment of Ahmed Din as my Interpreter—Tashgam—Snow Leopard—Kashmir Soldiers—Kargil—Envoy from the Dalai Lama of Lhasa—A Dangerous Path—Shergol—Hindu Temple.

May 17th.—A lovely day for laundry purposes, with a bright, warm sun. I commenced my washing arrangements by getting a large "degchi" from the Fort, in which I boiled about a gallon of water. I then served out some common yellow bar-soap, and paraded all my coolies, Shikaris, and servants, and made each man strip and soap; and, after I had got every man in the camp thoroughly clean, then I set them to work to clean and wash everything belonging to me. After the clothes had been all washed and dried in the sun, I spread my Skye plaid over my camp-table, and thus improvised an ironing-board. I presided individually over this department, as I had a flat-iron with me, and when it was heated up to the right pitch, I started on a lot of pocket handkerchiefs. It was a perfect success; and, having shown Sehr Singh how to manipulate the iron, I went to have my lunch. After lunch I came out to see how he was getting on, and found him very

busy, trying to induce a much crinkled handkerchief to become smooth, and he informed me he had been at that one article for half an hour, and it would not come like the ones the Sahib had done, so would the Sahib try. So I took the iron, and found it was quite cold, and explained to Sehr Singh it was only with a hot iron smoothness could be procured. In the middle of this great work my friend the Thanadar came to ask me if I would like to come and see a polo match that was about to take place that afternoon on the polo ground not far from my camp. I was most anxious to see the game as played by the natives in this part of the country, where for 600 years it has been the national game, every village having its polo ground, in the same way that every country village in England has its cricket ground.

I accompanied the Thanadar to the spot, which was beautifully situated just above the river. I measured the ground, which was enclosed by a rough wall of loose stones, about eighteen inches to two feet high, just to mark out the boundaries, and found it was 324 yards in length, 54 yards in breadth, and the two upright stones that had marked the goals probably for centuries were 14 yards apart. On the north side of the ground, and exactly half-way of its length, was a sort of grand stand for privileged spectators, composed of a raised stone and mud platform about four feet high. In the centre of this, and well to the front, was

a large round stone, on which was spread a Kashmiri blanket. This was the seat of honour, to which I was conducted by the Thanadar, the band, who had stationed themselves exactly opposite, playing—I suppose—an appropriate tune. They were the same performers as had welcomed me yesterday at the Fort. All around were spectators, some standing, some sitting. There could not have been less than 200 people, and I wondered where they had all sprung from, for there were very few houses to be seen. Then the players arrived—twenty-two of them—on wiry-looking little ponies, and a wilder-looking lot of polo players were probably never before seen. The sticks they play with differ from our ideas of a polo-stick, inasmuch as they are much shorter in the handle and much thicker at the end, and resemble a hockey or even a golf-club more than the polo-stick we are accustomed to see.

After the two elevens had faced each other, just opposite the "grand stand," the umpire started the game by throwing the ball into the middle of the ground, when there was more than the usual amount of scrimmage, there being nearly three times the usual number of players. Then one wild individual, on a good-looking chestnut pony, got away with the ball, and, running it down to the goal, nearly scored one; but a still wilder-looking customer on a grey charged him, and got the ball away, and so the game went on. Two or three were really very fair players, and made

some excellent back-handed strokes; and one and all rode like demons, without the slightest regard for the safety of their own necks, of those of their own side, or of those of their opponents. Consequently there were frequent collisions; and, although they cut each other about with their sticks, no one seemed to mind in the least. At last one man hit the ball between the goal-stones; but, to my utter amazement, a tremendous rally took place behind, until all of a sudden a man threw himself off his pony and took the ball up in his hand. It appears that hitting the ball between the stones does not count a goal unless the striker or one of his own side pick the ball up off the ground. The result of this rule may be easily imagined.

At one time all the players disappeared from view, for one side were trying to take the ball away behind the goal, with a view to dismounting and picking it up, while the defending side were equally trying to get the ball back again upon the polo-ground. After a goal has been secured in the manner above-mentioned, one of the losing side takes the ball in his right hand, and gallops as hard as he can, followed by the whole of the rest of the players at full speed, until he comes opposite the "grand stand." Here he (still at full gallop) throws the ball up in the air and hits it with the end of his stick towards his opponents' goal. This is really a very pretty performance, for they seldom missed hitting the ball. The game seemed interminable, as to

win a *game* of polo one side or the other must get five, seven, or nine goals.

When it was over, I told the Thanadar I would like to see eight play, as we do, and, if he would select the two best players to captain the two teams, and let them choose their own three men each, I would give them five rupees to play for. This was soon done, and then it was much easier to see the play. My friend on the chestnut was captain of the winning team, and was much pleased when I gave him the prize, rupees being very scarce in those parts. After this a second team played for the same amount, the winning side being captained by Mirza, my head pony wallah, a very smart lad, who, as he hails from this neighbourhood, was allowed to play. The band meanwhile discoursed soft music, and one could always tell when a goal was scored, not only by the excited cries and shouts of the partisan spectators, but by the band making the most hideous and discordant noises conceivable.

Cunningham in his history of Ladak describes a game of polo which he witnessed in 1847 in this country, and his description of the game, as played nearly half a century ago, bears so striking a resemblance to the polo I saw to-day, that I think the passage worthy of quotation. He writes: "The favourite amusement of the Botis of Ladak and Balk is polo, in which all parties, from the highest to the lowest, can take part. I saw the game played at Mulbil, in a field four hundred

yards long and eighty yards broad, which was walled round for the purpose with a stone dyke. There were twenty players on each side, all mounted on ponies and armed with sticks about four feet long and bent at the lower end. One player took the ball and advanced alone into the middle of the field, where he threw up the ball, and as it fell, struck it towards one of the goals. The goals were formed of two upright stones, placed about twenty-five to thirty feet apart. When the ball was driven through a goal, one of the successful party was obliged to dismount and pick it up, for, if the opposite party should have driven it back before it was picked up, the goal did not count.

The game consisted in winning a certain number of goals, either five, seven, or nine. Numerous musicians were in attendance, who made a most lively din whenever a goal was won, and the noise was increased by the cheers of the successful party. The game is a very spirited one, and well calculated for the display of bold and active horsemanship. Accidental blows occur frequently, but the poor ponies are the principal sufferers. The game was once common in India, under the name of "chaogan," but it is now completely forgotten. The old chaogan grounds still exist in every large town in the Punjab hills; in Bilaspur, Nadon, Shujanpur, Kangra, Haripur, and Chamba, where the goal-stones are still standing. The game is repeatedly mentioned by Baber, but after his time it gradually

became obsolete. It was introduced by the Mussulman conquerors, and the very first king Kutb-ud-din Aibak was killed by a fall from his horse while playing chaogan in A.D. 1210. The Pathan kings of India still continued to join in the game down to the time of Sikandar Lodi, in A.D. 1498, when (according to Ferishta, vol. i., page 199), "one day while the king and his court were playing at chaogan, the bat of Haibat Khan Shirwani by accident came in contact with the head of Suliman the son of Darya Khan Lodi, who received a severe blow.

"This was resented on the spot by Khizr Khan, the brother of Suliman, who, galloping up to Haibat Khan, struck him violently over the skull. In a few minutes both sides joined in the quarrel, and the field was in an uproar and confusion. Mahmud Khan Lodi and Khan Khanan Lodi interposing, endeavoured to pacify Haibat Khan, and persuaded him to go home quietly with them. The king, apprehensive of conspiracy, retired immediately to the palace; but nothing more transpiring he made another party at the same game a few days after."

* * * * * *

On returning to camp after the polo was finished, I found Khalik Basdar* just arrived from Srinagar with

* Khalik Basdar accompanied Captain Bower in his recent famous march across the unexplored regions of Tibet, as his head caravan man.

the letter I was expecting from Younghusband containing the Viceroy's telegraphic communication to me, informing me that Ahmed Din had been appointed Munshi to Mr. Macartney at Kashgar, in Chinese Turkistan, and that he could accompany me as interpreter as far as that point. This was very good news for me, as I had asked the Viceroy to bestow this appointment upon Ahmed Din, who was personally known to myself, and who was most anxious to accompany me through Chinese territory.

This other man, Khalik Basdar, was also very anxious for me to take him, but I have my eye upon another, one Ramzan, who accompanied Captain Younghusband on one of his great exploring journeys between the Karakoram and the Pamirs. I hope to pick him up in Leh.

May 18th.—Left Dras at 6 A.M., accompanied still by the Thanadar, who is determined to hand me over safe and sound to the Thanadar of Kargil in Baltistan. The civility of these people is positively oppressive.

Our route to-day lay through a perfect wilderness of rocks and narrow gorges, following the course of the river all the way. The only green spot I saw during all the march was a small plantation of aspen trees, near a shepherd's house, the only habitation for miles in that vast solitude. At this spot I noticed an extraordinary circumstance connected with the trans-

mission of sound. I was walking by the side of the river, which at this point becomes a cataract, rushing through a very high and narrow gorge; on my right were the aspen trees, and close behind them the precipitous rocks that form one wall of the gorge. The moment I got abreast of this little plantation, I heard a most peculiar hissing noise, resembling no sound I had ever heard before. I listened, then walked on; and, as soon as I got clear past the trees, the sound ceased and the roar of the cataract was all I could hear. I returned and listened again; there was no doubt but that the hissing noise was the echo of the cadence of the water in the cataract, reverberating from off the rocks behind the plantation and returning through the leaves of the aspen trees, which seemed to quiver from the sound, for there was not a breath of wind to stir them.

I reached Tashgam about 5 P.M., having walked the whole way from Dras, resting under a rock for shade during the heat of the day. My pony, the "General," was rather lame, having been badly stung by some reptile last night, so I gave him a holiday. When I arrived in camp there was great excitement amongst the men, as my chota shikari had seen a snow-leopard about three miles from the camp. I need hardly say I went to look for the animal and never saw him.

May 19th.—Up at 4.30 A.M., having determined to do two marches to-day and got off by 5 A.M. A lovely

fresh morning; our route lay down the Dras River, through more rocks and stones, in fact through the bleakest and most inhospitable-looking bit of country I ever travelled through. Crossed the river by a most unpleasant wooden bridge, full of holes, very narrow and slippery, and, like all these bridges, destitute of any sort of hand-rail. I trembled when I watched the baggage-animals crossing it; but they all got over in safety. After a march of nine miles, we came to the junction of the Shigar River with the Dras. The Shigar flows in a south-easterly direction, coming from the Karpuchu-Loongma district. It is fully as large as the Dras, and the two together made a very respectably-sized river, along which we travelled until we reached Chanagund, on the frontier of Baltistan. There I halted my caravan at about 11 A.M., the sun being by that time very powerful. I was rather amused at a little incident that helped to break the monotony of my weary and solitary march this morning. On breasting a little hill, I suddenly espied two red-coated individuals coming towards me. These turned out to be two Kashmiri soldiers in uniform marching along with sloped arms, driving five goats in front of them. About 300 yards behind them came another lot of ten soldiers, also in uniform, in charge of a sergeant; they were spread all over the place trying in vain to keep about twenty more goats from straggling up the hill-side in search of something more palatable than stones to eat.

I must have evidently made an instantaneous impression upon the sergeant in charge of the party, for he gave the words in English, "Fall in!" as soon as he saw me coming, which they did, and marched past me in fours, shouldering arms in passing.

It did seem odd to me (although I knew, of course, that the Maharajah's army was drilled in English) to hear, in the midst of the Himalayas, a Kashmiri-sergeant give the word "shoulder arms," then, after having passed me, "Slope arms, march at ease," when off they went after their goats again.

After some hours of this wilderness it was a certain relief to the eye to pass through a grove of the *Cupressus Macrocarpa*, for, small and stunted as they were, yet anything green was welcome, and these cypresses can never be ungraceful. After a two hours halt I sent the caravan on again, meaning to make Kargil that evening, and in five or six miles we came to the junction of another river, the Sooroo,* on the banks of which, some few miles up, stands the Fort, and above it Kargil, the second largest village of Baltistan.

There I was met by the Thanadar of Kargil, who proffered me the usual tribute of five rupees, and welcomed me to his district. As we had to ride

* The Sooroo river runs north, and after joining the combined rivers Shigar and Dras at this spot they all flow to the north-east under the common name of Dras, joining the Indus at Chathathang about two marches from this junction.

together for some miles, I endeavoured to make myself agreeable; but, as my Hindustani is limited at present to ordering tea and hot water, counting up to twenty, and a few swear words, the conversation did not progress as I could have wished. However, a narrow pathway between some rocks for a mile was my best friend, for then we had to ride in single file, and I was not supposed to make conversation over my shoulder to a man riding behind me.

After emerging from the rocks, we came into a cultivated bit of country, and on the side of a stream I recognised an old friend in a bush that grows in the Hudson's Bay territory, called by the Indians there the Kinnikinnik plant, the inner bark of which is used by them as a substitute for tobacco. I have smoked many a pipe of it in the prairies between the Red River and the Saskatchewan in old days.

I reached Kargil long before the caravan, and had to wait an hour and a half before they arrived.

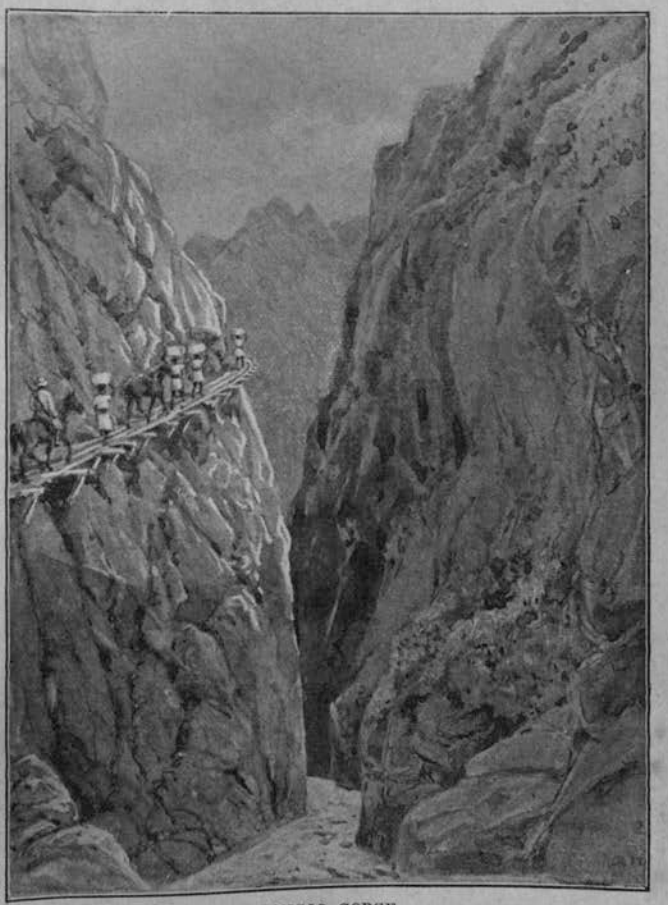
May 20th.—Another long march again to-day, as I must reach Shergol before nightfall. After taking a tender leave of the Thanadar of Dras, who has been with me ever since I crossed the Zoji-la last Sunday, I left Kargil, accompanied by the Thanadar of that village, crossing the River Sooroo by a most rickety-looking affair, to which apologies for bridges I am getting more reconciled day by day. Soon we emerged on to a large

stony plain, very like a Russian steppe, which took us two good hours to cross, when we reached the foot of the hills again.

At about 9 o'clock, having selected a shady nook, I sat down and ate my breakfast, not having had time for any sort of a meal before starting, and, while discussing it, I heard the sound as of Canadian sleigh-bells approaching. Peeping from out my little haven of refuge, from which I could see everything, but could not be seen myself, I saw a very picturesque cavalcade sweep past at a hand canter. First came two outriders, their horses' bridles and breast-plates being covered with little bells; next came the principal figure, a man evidently by his dress, of some exalted rank. He went too quickly for me to get more than a passing glance at him; but I could see he was mounted on a powerful chestnut, whose trappings were rich, and I had a vision of a green turban and rich dress flashing by. Then came another two men, probably body servants, and the rear of the cavalcade was brought up by an escort of six men, armed to the teeth. About an hour or two afterwards we passed his caravan, in which were ponies laden with brick tea from Lhasa.

On inquiring, I found that the man in green was a great Lama from Lhasa, a special envoy from the Dolai Lama, on his way to Kashmir, the bearer of all sorts of complimentary messages to the Maharajah, to say nothing of presents innumerable, amongst which

was a beautiful Chinese dog, that I was able to get a



LONGOO GORGE.

good look at as he accompanied the caravan. Passing

the village of Pashkyam, I came across another polo ground, and at Lotsum, perched up on a high rock, was a little stone shrine, which held a Buddhist idol.

The river along whose banks we travelled to-day is the Wakkha. It flows through some of the narrowest gorges we have yet had to pass through, and in some places the pathway was very dangerous. Several times the path was supported on strong sticks, jutting out of the bare wall of the precipice, where it was impossible to cut a pathway. On these supports were laid trunks of small trees, bound together with withies, on the top of which was placed earth and stones, to form a roadway. It was certainly not more than four feet broad, and a yawning precipice on the right, and one's shoulder grazing the precipitous wall of rock on the left, made it a place not to be hurried over. I came upon it all of a sudden. Being on horseback, I had no device but to ride over it, as to turn back was impossible, and to dismount there was not room. So the "General" and I, with our hearts in our mouths, negotiated the dangerous passage, and, I think, were both more than ordinarily glad when we found ourselves on another pathway which three weeks ago I would not have walked along for anything, such is the force of habit. When the caravan arrived at this spot, the loads had to be shifted, as no pony carrying tent-poles could possibly pass. So the poles had to be carried by the coolies, and many of the other loads had to be altered to suit the narrow

path. We, however, reached Shergol in safety about sunset, camping just underneath a large Hindu temple carved out of the solid rock, and covered with some extraordinary, hideous and grotesque images, painted in red and green colours, but certainly not more hideous than the men and women who formed the population of this very queer-looking village.

On counting the ponies, I found I was one short; and presently the delinquent arrived with his load (two kiltas) smashed all to pieces. One kilta being full of preserved soups, the contents were not spoiled; but in the other was a much-cherished bottle of pickled onions and several of curry-powder, all, alas, broken to atoms! However, I sent for the thanadar, to see with his own eyes the damage done; and the pony-men were cut the amount of the loss without murmur or dispute. Came on to rain heavily, and continued doing so most of the night. *Altitude,* 10,450.

CHAPTER VIII.

Western Tibet — Description and History — Dogra Conquest — Tasgam—Buddhist Monastery—Chod-tens—Manis — Colossal figure of Chamba—Namika Pass—A Nautch at Kharbu—The Fotu-la (Pass)—Lama Yuru—Flogging a pony-man.

May 21st.—To-day we entered Western Tibet. The country of which the common name is Ladak, or as it is written in Tibetan La-tags, is also called Maryul (red land) and Kha-chan-pa (snow land), both of which names are used by the old Chinese travellers. In former days, when it was one of the four provinces of Lhasa, it went by the name of Ngarees-Kharsum.* The other three provinces were Khan on the east (meaning side), Oo (meaning centre), in which is situated the city of Lhasa,† and Tsung (meaning pure).

Prior to the Dogra conquest of Ladak or Western Tibet, the Ladakis used to look upon the Lhasa government as all-powerful in things spiritual as well as in things temporal, and it is still held in great awe by

* *Ngarees* meaning *subject to, khor, circle, sum, three;* the three dependent provinces or circles, Ladak, Gardok, and Googey.

† *Lha,* signifying a deity or fairy; *sa,* an abbreviation of the word Sakiat, meaning place.

them, even to this day, although they are entirely emancipated from it.

Ladak is inhabited by a race of people who call themselves Bot-pa. They speak a peculiar language called Tibetan, and under a hierarchy of monks called Lamas, follow the religion of Buddha. Ladak is the most western province of the country, known to most Europeans as Tibet; but the name Tibet is unknown to the people of the country, who invariably call Western Tibet Ladak. There is also another name by which it is sometimes called by its inhabitants, viz.: "Dzambooling-i-ttheya," which means literally the navel of the world.

At the present time the country which we speak of as Ladak, includes only Ladak proper, Nubra, Tanksey and Roopshoo. The Tibetans called their country Bod-jul-Kawatshan—the snow land of the Bodpas.

The name Tibet was first written by the Arabs without any vowel, thus Tbt. Afterwards Tübet, Tobat, and Marco Polo writes of it as Thebett. This Bod is like our Bet, and the syllable Ti must be written MTO, so that the real name is Tobod, which means the high land of Bod.

མངའ་རིས། (Mnaris) is the word for the whole country round the upper sources of the Indus and Sutlej, together with Kashmir and the most western Chinese provinces where Tibetans are living. In official letters or papers, Ladak is called Mnaris-manyul, མངའ་རིས་མང་ཡུལ།

After the Dogra conquest of the country,* Dras, Sooroo, and Poorik were detached from Ladak and annexed to the Baltistan Wazarat, while Zangs Kar was attached to the Jamoo governorship. Rudok had been lost to the Ladak Rajahs some time before the Dogras came, but in the summer of 1841 Zarawar Singh recovered it, though on his defeat and death in December 1841, it was again evacuated by the Dogras. In 1842 a treaty was concluded between the Dogras and the Chinese, recognising the established boundaries of Ladak, as they had stood at the time of the Dogra invasion.

Prior to the advent of the Dogras, the Sikhs had obtained possession of Lahaul and Spiti, which provinces formed part of the territory ceded to the British by the Sikhs, under Article IV. of the Treaty of the 9th March, 1846. Immediately after the conclusion of this Treaty, the British Government arranged to sell the whole of the territory ceded by the Sikhs to Rajah Golab Singh of Jamoo, for a crore† of rupees, but as it was, on reconsideration of the question, deemed inexpedient to make over the whole of the territories in question, a treaty was concluded with Golab Singh on the 16th March, 1846, the result of which was that Spiti and Lahaul remained British Territory, and that Rajah Golab Singh paid the British Government only three quarters of a crore,

* 1834-1842.

† 10,000,000 rupees, or £1,000,000 sterling, at the then rate of exchange.

instead of a full crore of rupees. Ladak is now governed by a Wazir, assisted by a Naib or deputy Wazir. The garrison of the country consists of about fifty regular soldiers, and fifty irregulars and some seventy Ladaki soldiers. There are forts at Khalsi and Leh. There used to be a fort at Shushot, but it has been recently pulled down. The revenue of the country amounts to about 64,000 rs. a year, and the expenditure to about 32,000 rs. Considered by itself, Ladak is a poor and insignificant country, but politically speaking it is of some importance, as its frontiers are conterminous on the north with those of the Chinese, and on the east with those of the Lhasa Government. From a commercial point of view it is also a place of some importance, as a considerable portion of the trade between India and Central Asia passes through it. During the past three years the value of this trade has averaged about fifteen lakhs of rupees a year. A few merchants carry on a through trade between India and Turkestan, but the mass of the trade is carried on between Indians and Kashmiris, who come up as far as Leh only, and there exchange their goods for the products of Central Asia, brought down by merchants who do not go further south than Leh. This trade is most beneficial to Ladak, for as it is a long and hard journey from Leh to Yarkand, or even from Leh to India, merchants on reaching Leh are glad to rest themselves and their baggage-ponies (camels are not used) for a month, or

even two months, before attempting the return journey. The result is that during the months of August, September, and October the country people reap a small harvest by supplying grass, grain, wood, etc., to those merchants and their followers.

The Government of India stations a political officer at Leh. He is termed the British Joint Commissioner, and under the terms of the commercial treaty, executed between the British Government and the Kashmir Durbar in April 1870, he, together with the Kashmir Joint Commissioner, exercises civil and criminal jurisdiction in cases where both or either of the parties concerned are foreigners, that is to say, others than subjects of the Maharajah of Kashmir.*

One of the first objects of interest I saw to-day, after emerging from the Shergol valley, was a high conical rock with a large white building perched on the very highest part of it. This was the Goompah, or Buddhist monastery of Tasgam, of which I managed to get a sketch. It seemed quite inaccessible, for—the path being at the back of the rock—there was apparently no road up to it. Below, at the foot of the rock, was the little village of Tasgam, rich in Chod-tens,† or "offering receptacles." These edifices, which are built principally of stone or mud, were formerly dedicatory buildings, erected in honour of Shakya Thubba, or of some one of the Holy Buddhas; but they are now simply the tombs con-

* Ramsay's Speyra Ladaki. † Choitya in Sanscrit.

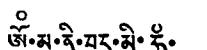
taining the ashes of some Lamas or holy men, which the relatives, friends, and admirers of the deceased periodically come and worship. Close to these Chodtens are long, low stone platforms, varying in length

BUDDHIST MONASTERY, TASGAM, W. TIBET.

from ten to 500 yards, averaging from four to seven feet high, and broad in proportion to their length.*

* There are hundreds of these Manis all over the country, every little village has one. In walking or riding past one, all Buddhists keep to the left, so that they should always leave the *Mani* on their *right* hand.

The top surface of these Manis, as they are called, is roofed, or paved as it were, with oval flat stones or slabs, inscribed with Tibetan sentences and in Tibetan characters. The most usual inscription is as follows :—



ōm māni padme hūm—
meaning literally, "oh, thou jewel in the Lotus hūm!"

Jäschke explains it thus ཨོཾ་ ōm. Sanscrit ཨ་ཨོཾ་ mystical interjection in later Hindooism, the symbol of the Hindoo triad, inasmuch as it consists of the three sounds, a (Vishnu), u (Shiva), and m (Brahma). This interjection frequently occurs in the prayers of the Northern Buddhists of Tibet, and especially in the famous "six syllable prayer"—

om ma ni pad me hum—
1 2 3 4 5 6

The person addressed in these words is not Buddha, but Spyan-ras-yzigs; by some he is thought to be the author of them. The Tibetans themselves are ignorant of the proper sense of these six syllables, if sense at all there be in them, and it is not unlikely that some shrewd priest invented this form of prayer in order to furnish the common people with a formula, or symbol, easily to be retained by the memory, and the frequent recital of which might satisfy their religious wants. And though there may be no obvious meaning in such exclamations or prayers, yet their efficacy is sure

to be firmly believed in by a people whose practical religion chiefly consists in the performance of certain rites and ceremonies, in a devout veneration of their Lamas, combined with frequent oblations to them, in abstaining from gross sins (and they regard even the killing of live animals as such) and in the Pradakshina. The numerous attempts that have been made to explain the Om-ma-ni-pad-me-hum satisfactorily, and to discover a deep sense or even a hidden wisdom in it have proved more or less unsuccessful. The most simple and popular of these explanations is derived from the purely intrinsic circumstance that the Sanscrit words of the prayer consist of six syllables, and accordingly it is suggested that each of these syllables, when pronounced by a pious Buddhist, conveys a blessing upon one of the "six classes of beings." The slabs or stones, on which are engraved these mystic syllables, are placed upon the Mani by all classes of people and are really votive offerings towards the attainment of some object or desire.

For instance, if a merchant is about to start on the long and arduous journey from Ladak to Yarkand, or Kashgar, and desires a safe journey and a good market for his wares at the other end, he will go to the Lama of his district and purchase from him a slab duly engraven with these mystic words, and, placing it reverently on the top of the village Mani, will start on his travels in full confidence that his wish will be obtained. Slabs

are also purchased and placed on the Mani by the husbandmen wishing for a good harvest, and by childless parents in the full belief that in due course they will be surrounded by a fine family of children.

About a mile beyond the village of Tasgam, on the right-hand side of the road, stands a huge rock entirely by itself, on the face of which is carved a gigantic full-length figure of a man; on his head is a peculiar ornament, resembling somewhat the "Prince of Wales's Feathers," which catches up his long hair off his forehead in the style formerly known as "*à l'Imperatrice*," and the plaited ends of which eventually find their way down to his shoulders. In his ears are enormous rings, and a beautifully-carved necklace of two rows of round beads adorns his neck. He has four arms—two pointed upwards, as if in an attitude of supplication, the remaining two hanging down by his side. The two arms on each side of his body are encircled by the coil of a snake. Round his waist is a belt studded with small stones, and the carving beneath the waist is so crude and so out of proportion to the rest of the figure, that one can hardly believe it is the work of the same artist, the legs being like two sticks. The feet are encircled with the coil of, presumably, the same snake as the arms. This figure represents the deity Chamba, the future Buddha Maitreya. The figure is in a splendid state of preservation, and the face is like one of the ancient Egyptian monuments.

After leaving this valley, replete with tombs, manis, monuments, and monasteries, our course lay due east (we had been heading due south all the morning), and through a stony desert for ten miles, with granite and sandstone rocks to the right hand and to the left. Not a living thing to be seen; not a patch of verdure, not a drop of water. It reminded me very much of a portion of the desert that lies to the south-east of Aleppo, between that city and Damascus, especially as it was so shut in by the surrounding rocks, that I could not get even a glimpse of a snow-topped mountain to remind me that I was in the Himalayas. After emerging from this desert-waste, we commenced very perceptibly to ascend a very steep gradient, and, after a tough climb, I found myself shivering in a blinding snowstorm, with my aneroid pointing to 13,020 feet. It was then that I recognised the fact that I was on the top of the Namika-la (pass), but as I was quite alone, six miles at least ahead of my caravan, I had no one to remind me of it—and it had entirely escaped my memory that we were to cross the Namika pass to-day. The difference of temperature was most trying. In the desert the sun was beating down upon those granite rocks, and the heat was simply scorching, and I rode in my shirt-sleeves, tying coat and waistcoat on to my saddle. Within two hours and a half I was shivering in a snowstorm, with the thermometer at freezing-point.

However, I descended quicker than I ascended, and

was very glad to find myself 2000 feet lower—the height of the Saneeloomah river, which I struck opposite the village of Changdoon. This river, which empties itself into the Indus at Sanjak, takes its rise from two sources—one between Choolong and Kong, receiving the melted snows of those mountains, known in the Trigonometrical Survey Map as "D. 22."

The other more eastern source is in Chomo Thang, where it is fed by the snows of "D. 24" and "D. 25," all three very high but unnamed peaks.

When I got well down the Saneeloomah Valley, there were several villages visible and several tracks, and, in order to avoid taking the wrong one, as I had no guide, I dismounted, and tying my pony up to a dead tree, rolled myself up in my plaid, and waited patiently for my caravan. In due time they arrived; and then we all went on together to the village of Kharbu, which stands a little above the river. It was a long and trying march to-day for men and horses, and both were pretty well done by the time we got in.

Nevertheless, after the tents were pitched, the Thanadar informed me that he had ordered a "Nautch" dance for my benefit (anything less like a Nautch, as it turned out, I never saw). As all the "ladies of the ballet" were dressed in their best and ready to perform, I did not like to disappoint them, so I sat in a chair outside my tent, and they speedily appeared on an open space just in front of me. About 100 men were present,

and sat or stood in a semicircle; and the band, consisting of two tom-toms and three reed instruments, took up its position in the centre. Fifteen Tibetan damsels—the youngest apparently over forty, and one more repulsively hideous than another, took part in the performance. Their dress was at least picturesque, if somewhat clumsy for dancing in; their hair was done in plaits and hung down their backs and shoulders; over the top of the head they wore a black sort of "Marie Stuart" arrangement, studded with rough green turquoises, which came down the back of the head and neck. This headdress, the size of which depends upon the wealth of its owner, is called in Tibetan "Peyrak." A good one is perhaps ten inches wide at the top and three feet long, and worth 300 rupees, an ordinary one being worth about 50 rs. When a woman is young, she invests her worldly wealth in turquoises, which she fastens on to her peyrak. These turquoises, which are very faulty in colour and full of flaws, come from China. Ear-rings and quaint necklaces of eight and ten rows of some sort of metal, looking like silver, with red beads between the rows, hung nearly down to their waists. Their dresses were made of a coarse dark-blue serge, and round their waists were enormous cummerbunds of bright colours; on their shoulders they wore a red mantle, with green trimming, and lined with sheep-skin, while rough grey stockings, evidently innocent of garters, or any other known support overlooked large red-and-white shoes,

a cross between the Chinese shoe and moccasin of the Red Indian; and this completed the costume of these Tibetan Coryphées.

The opening figure of the ballet was as follows: the fifteen performers waddled ungracefully round, winding in snake-like curves, all looking down at their feet, with arms extended, hands open, palms uppermost.

During this serpentine waddle the spectators chanted some words in unison with the music.

Figure 2.—At a signal given by the band-master, the whole fifteen women bent down as if to pick something up off the ground, always marching round and round with a sort of little shuffle-step, now facing to the right-about, now facing back again.

Figure 3.—Music accelerating and gathering fresh vigour from the increased speed. The performers catch the infection, and in their excitement very nearly break into a trot, opening and shutting both hands in time to the music as they move.

Figure 4.—Increase of speed on the part of the Coryphées, who actually snap their fingers as if dancing a reel. Sudden stoppage on the part of the music, and the dancers join hands and advance in line singing a song and swinging their bodies to the rhythm. The song being ended, the dancers face about and dance away from the men, who, at a given signal, rush out, and each man selecting a lady and seizing her by the waist, they form up in pairs, and walk round, dancing a sort of shuffle-

step, the women swaying their bodies to and fro, and the men wagging their heads violently from side to side, which sets all their pig-tails flying in the most ludicrous manner. This finished the ballet.

Oh, shades of Mesdames Taglioni and Vestris, what would ye have thought of this travesty on the art in which ye both excelled and of which ye were for so many years the unrivalled and graceful exponents!

After the performance was over, I went amongst the ladies of the ballet to distribute a little modest backsheesh, when to my surprise I found several of them had been carrying their babies on their backs, concealed in the sheep-skin linings of their mantles!

Sunday, May 22nd.—Took the altitude of Kharbu before leaving and made it 11,690 feet.

Saw a great quantity of blue-rocks (pigeons) flying about, and managed to shoot a few for the pot.

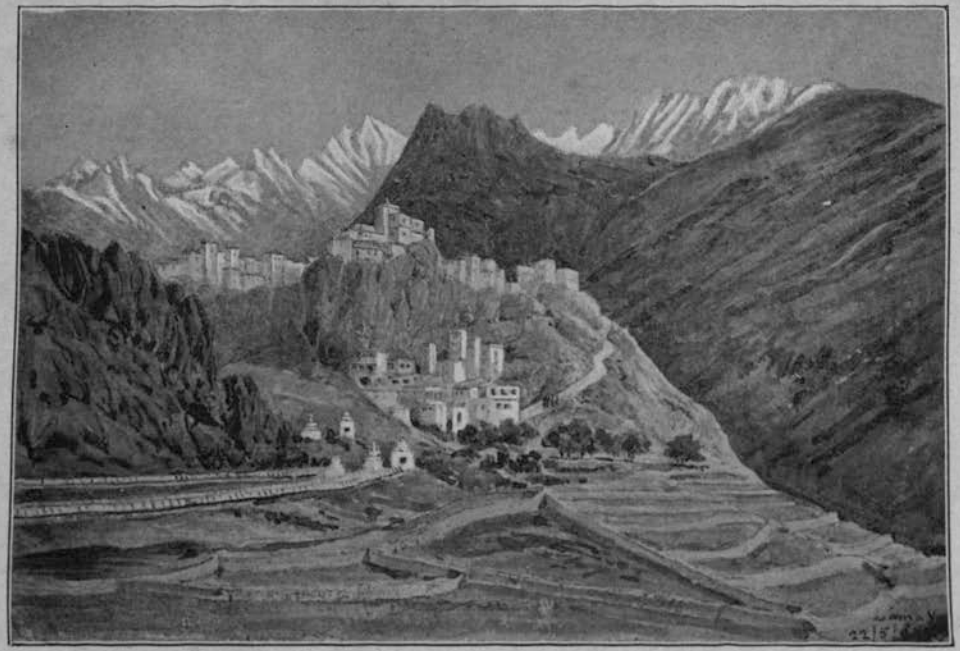
About two miles up the river I was met by a great swell on horseback, dressed in Chinese costume, and accompanied by two mounted officials. This turned out to be "Sring Palgais," state official and head-man of Ladak, who had been sent by Bishandass, the Wazir of Lădak, with a letter of welcome to me, and with orders to escort me to Leh (five days' march). After some feeble attempts at conversation with this gentleman on my part, we continued our journey until we reached the foot of the Fotu-la (pass), where we rested a bit before

making the ascent, which was nothing in comparison to the descent on the other side.

The view from the top of the pass was simply magnificent; such a panorama as seldom meets the eye. At my feet lay range upon range of lesser mountains, then the deserts and plains which mark the windings of the Indus river, beyond which rose the majestic range of the Eastern Himalayas; on the left of the picture the great Saidar Ghairni peaks, just showing above the masses of other snowy summits that lay in front of them, and on the right the white tops of many a giant in the Changchenmo country. When I considered that I had got to cross the whole of that range, and many others behind it, before I could reach Chinese territory, I felt indeed as if my journey had not yet begun, and still to-day marks an era in the expedition, for as the Zoji-la may be called the entrance to the Western Himalayas, so may the Fotu-la be fairly reckoned as the exit from that range; and it is exactly a week to-day since I crossed the Zoji-la, a distance of 122 miles, at a mean elevation of 11,340 feet, this pass (the Fotu-la) being the highest as yet crossed, viz: 13,450 feet by my aneroid.

The descent towards Lama Yuru was extraordinarily abrupt, and, had it not been fairly good going, would have been very difficult to accomplish on horseback.

The descent was 2000 feet in about two miles, nearly 1 in 5.



LAMA YURU, BUDDHIST MONASTERY, W. TIBET. [*To face* p. 95, *Vol. I.*

Lama Yuru was reached about 5 P.M. It is one of the most peculiarly situated villages I ever saw. Perched up on the top of a high ledge of rocks, honey-combed with age, the houses look as if they must topple over, each one being built on a separate little jagged peak, and, on the highest peak of all, the Buddhist Monastery crowns this rickety-looking pile of tenements. To-day, every house-top was crowded, and the Lamas were in full force on the roof of their monastery; tom-toms were beating, reed instruments squealing, and the whole place was alive with people. I thought it was some religious fête; but imagine my astonishment when I found this was all in honour of my humble self; the fact of my being in the company of such a distinguished individual, as the "head-man of Ladak," lent additional importance to my advent. At the entrance to the village the road lay between rows of Manis and hundreds of Chod-tens, which contained the ashes of generations of departed prominent Lama Yuru citizens, and their Lamas. Ranged in front of these monuments were the women of the village in two rows, all dressed in their best, lining each side of the road, who deposited at my feet the usual tribute of "chang," * contained in

* Chang, or Chhung, is the universal drink of the Tibetans, and is a most intoxicating beverage. It is really a sort of home-brewed very sour ale made from *Lums* (malt). In this country the NAS (barley) required for malting purposes, after being thoroughly cleaned, is put into a large Degchi, after which water is poured over it to a depth of three or four inches, after which the Degchi is put

vessels of brass, salaaming with their foreheads almost touching the ground. Next came the men, the chiefs of which offered dried apricots, brass dishes of flour, and the head-man of Lama Yuru's offering was a sheep. So, preceded by a band of music, and this numerous escort, I rode proudly into the courtyard of the house prepared for me.

I went through the house in question, and, after a minute examination, elected to pitch my tent in the courtyard, as the house was not particularly clean, and none of the doors would shut, and the windows were entirely destitute of glass or shutters. So seeing visions of thorough draughts and consequent cold catching, I preferred my tent and informed my host, I hope without hurting his feelings.

After the caravan arrived, it was reported to me that two kiltas were broken, owing to the carelessness of the pony-men, so I sent for the head pony-man

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on a slow fire and the contents allowed to simmer until the whole of the water is absorbed by the barley. It is then called *Lums*. The Lums is taken out of the Degchi and spread out to cool, after which it is sprinkled over with spices and then put into a warm place for two days, after which it ferments. It is then put into a large pan, while it rises for another two days, then water is added, and afterwards it is drawn off and strained. This is called Machoo, and is the very best ale of the kind. But usually water is added two or three times to this Machoo and strained and drawn off. These three drawings off are then mixed together and sold as Chhang, which would answer to our small beer, were it not about as strong as spirits.

(belonging to Kharbu) and informed him I should fine him two rupees, one for each kilta smashed. He was a very independent gentleman, and was inclined to be impertinent. He swore he would be paid in full, or not at all, and flung the money down, which one of my servants picked up, and I then told him he would get none at all. So, like a wise man, he took what he could get, and went off muttering curses to himself.

After dinner, which I took in my tent, I was writing up this journal, and finishing a few letters, when I fancied I heard a footstep outside. As all my servants, shikaris, coolies, etc., were lodging in little houses round this courtyard, I fancied it might be one of them, until I felt three or four violent wrenches, then in fell one side of the roof of my tent. I was out in a second, but the night being pitch dark, I could see no one. I shouted, however, to my servants, who luckily had none of them retired for the night, and the delinquent was caught, just as he was making good his escape at the door of the courtyard.

He was brought up to me, and, on examining him by the light of a lantern, I was not surprised to recognise in the prisoner the head pony-man from Kharbu. He made a full confession, and said he pulled up my tent pegs out of spite, and in hopes the tent would fall in upon me. I ordered out my cutting whip, and turning out every man in the

place that belonged to my caravan, had the man held by two coolies, and ordered "Fireworks" to give him two dozen, in the presence of all my servants, hoping it would have a beneficial and moral effect upon them. "Fireworks" laid on lustily with the whip, but I am afraid the man's clothes were too thick for the whipping to have hurt him as much as I could have wished. Had I the same job to do again, I should undoubtedly strip the delinquent, and let him have it on the bare back.

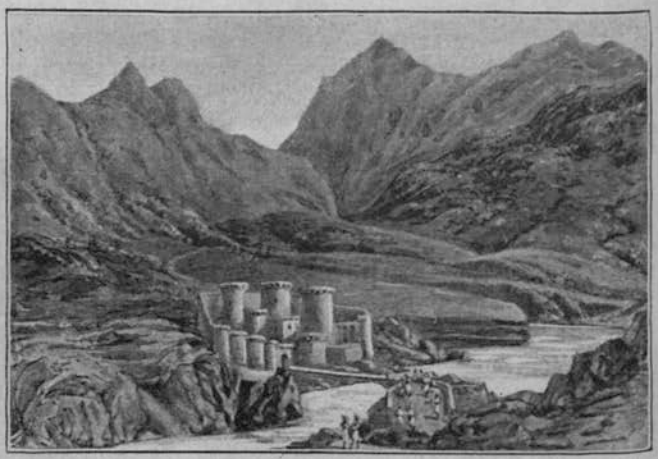
Hardly had we settled down and got my tent set up again, before a strange coolie arrived, mounted on a pony, with the news that my syce's wife had died that very afternoon on the Fotu-la (pass). It appeared on inquiry that Haidar, my Syce, had married a Ladaki woman and was bringing her up to her home in Leh, she keeping about one march behind my caravan all the way through Kashmir, and as she was crossing the pass this afternoon she died, so the coolie who was with her left the body on the pass, and taking her pony rode into my camp to report the circumstance to her husband. Him I sent for and asked what he intended to do, so he calmly replied that, if I would lend him my spade and a coolie, he would return at once, dig a hole, put her into it, and be back in time to march at six to-morrow morning. I luckily carry both spade and pickaxe with me, so, giving him the former implement and a coolie to help him, sent him off forthwith.

CHAPTER IX.

Cross the Indus—Khalsi Bridge and Fort—Brilliant Receptions—Naib Wazir of Ladak—Buddhist Prayer Wheel—*Ovis Nahura*—Arrived at Leh—Prince Galitzin—Arrival of Major Roche—"Fireworks" a Thief—Mr. Webber and Buddhism.

May 23rd.—When I started this morning there was Haidar, the Syce, looking very fresh, and to all appearance in excellent spirits. About a mile from Lama Yuru our route lay over a high narrow pass called Kapara-Rangram-Khorlum, then through a very narrow gorge for about two hours, until we struck the Indus at right angles, our course being nearly due north and the river flowing here from east to west. Last time I saw the Indus was when I crossed it at Attock, coming from Peshawar, and it is certainly larger here than there. We altered our course to due east, and followed the river until we reached the bridge and fort at Khalsi, where we crossed it and entered the fort on the right bank. Here we rested awhile, as Sring Palgais (the state official) was weary, he having had to walk for miles under a hot sun with his pony trotting in the most tantalizing way just in front of him. The fact was that he dismounted when I did, the etiquette here

being for an inferior always to dismount when his superior does, and mount also *vice versa*. I dismounted to go and stalk an old chikore, and my Syce held my pony. Sring Palgais, on the contrary, neglected to hold his pony, so the pony ran away, and was caught by a soldier at the fort.



BRIDGE OVER INDUS—KHALSI FORT.

The Indus here is very rapid and deep and of a most peculiarly ugly drab colour; it is mostly snow-water from the glaciers and ice-fields of the mountains, which form the range in which the river has its source, or sources,* viz.: the Kailas Range, from whence,

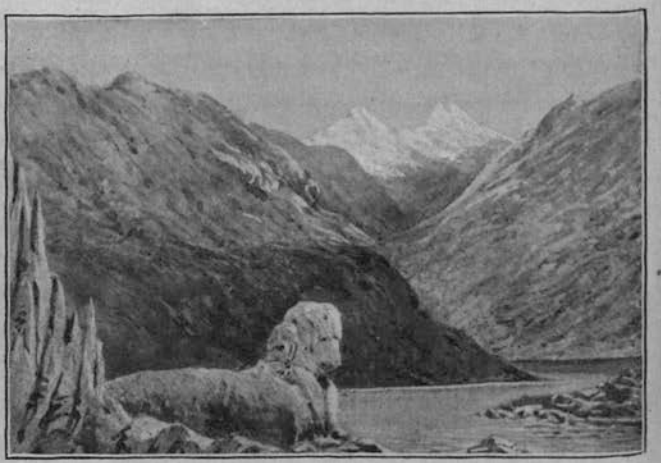
* The source of the Indus lies to the west of the Holy Lakes of Manasa Rowara and Rowan Rud, in the south-western slopes of

to its mouth at Karachi, its length is 1977 miles. At the village of Khalsi there was another reception in store for me. This time the women were beautifully dressed, and amongst them were some young ones with certain pretensions to good looks. These went through the same ceremony as at Lama Yuru, band and all, and after receiving the inevitable dried apricot, I managed to get comfortably settled by myself in a retired shady spot, by the side of a large water tank, where I lunched and slept for a while under the trees. After a hot ride for three hours through a sandy sort of desert, Sring Palgais and I entered the village of Nurla, escorted by six of the head-men of the place, who had ridden out to meet us. Here a still more brilliant reception awaited me, the ladies again to the fore with their brass vessels of chhang and gaudy sheep-skin-mantles, and the inhabitants taking a bird's eye view of the stranger from the tops of their houses. I was shown into a very clean mud house, overlooking the Indus, in which I took up my quarters for the night. Altitude, 10,240 ft.

Kailas Mountains (22,000 feet), in north latitude 31° 20′ and east longitude 80° 31′, at a height of 17,000 feet. Near its source it is called "Sin Katab," or the Lion's Mouth. The Kailas Range runs through the middle of Western Tibet. Kailas signifying Ice Mountains, is the Indian Olympus, the abode of Siva and the Celestials. The Tibetans call it Righ-yat, or king of mountains, and look upon Ti-se, the Kailas Peak, 20,700 feet, as the highest mountain in the world. Students of etymology will perceive that Righ also signifies king in Celtic, from which Roi, Re, etc.

May 24th.—A Chuprassie arrived from Kashmir with my letters and gave a fearful account of the ravages made in Srinagar by cholera, the mortality being over 200 a day.

To-day we followed the course of the Indus for eighteen miles, and saw nothing worthy of record except



SPHINX ROCK.

a large rock which, taken at a certain angle, resembled a Sphinx. I made a sketch of it, as it was very curious. About a mile from Saspoul I was met by a horseman leading a very nice chestnut horse. This was a delicate attention on the part of Bishandass, the Naib Wazir of Ladak, who had sent his own horse out to meet me. I of course immediately dismounted, and changing horses, rode

into the village, where I was met by the Wazir himself on foot, accompanied by several officials in semi-uniform. He advanced and held my stirrup as I dismounted. If my former receptions were brilliant, it may be imagined what this one was like, being under the eye of the Wazir himself, who had organised all the others by deputy. We walked, as usual, through rows of men and women who all salaamed most respectfully, passed first one band of music and then, after being received by about thirty Lamas all dressed in red,* we were played up to the door of a bungalow by the band belonging to the monastery, some of whose instruments resembled gigantic polo sticks, through which they blew, emitting a terrific blast, like the steam foghorn of a Cunard steamer, on the banks of Newfoundland. Once comfortably settled in the little bungalow, I was enabled to converse in peace with the Wazir, who speaks excellent English, and to thank him for all his attentions to me along the line of march, and also for sending his head-man, Sring Palgais, to meet me. Several of his officials were squatted on the floor of the room, and in the corner stood a tall soldier-like man, watching everything with an eye like a hawk. This was Shemsadin, who for twelve months assisted and accompanied Captain Bower, when he was tracking the murderer of Dalgleish,† and after hunting him down into

* The Nyimapa sect, called sometimes Drukpas.

† Dalgleish was murdered on the Karakoram Pass by a Pathan

Russian Central Asia, they captured him at Samarkand, Shemsadin receiving the government reward of 3000 rs. for taking him.

To-day being the Queen's birthday, I gave my men two sheep to eat and a fair allowance of chhang, in which to drink Her Majesty's health.

May 25th.—After a most comfortable night in the little bungalow, I started for Nimo at 6 A.M., accompanied by the Wazir, who I found excellent company and full of information. It was a great pleasure, after having been fifteen days alone without a soul to speak to, to have a companion with whom to converse.

At Nimo we rested in a shady grove of poplars,* and lunched and slept for an hour, and then continued our journey to Phayang, where we intended camping for the night, thus doing two marches in one day.

As we were riding by the side of a little stream, I noticed a tiny wooden house built over it, spanning it. Curiosity prompted me to look inside, and lo, and

---

named "Dad Mahammad," on the 8th of April, 1888, who was captured eventually by Shemsadin in Samarkand (Russian Central Asia). The murderer unfortunately managed to commit suicide in prison.

* These plantations of poplars are called "State Gardens," they are irrigated plots, varying from five to fifty acres, walled in and planted with poplar and willow, and when the trees come to maturity the wood is used by the State for repairing bridges, building bungalows, etc., there being no natural wood in the whole province.

behold, there was a Buddhist prayer-wheel being turned by water-power, and reeling off prayers at so many per hour!

On inquiry of some people at work close by, we discovered that it was the property of a small owner, whose house was close by, and whose father had lately died. His son had just erected this ingenious contrivance, whereby he is enabled to offer up innumerable prayers for his father's soul, with the minimum amount of trouble to himself.

In crossing the Plain of Tharu, a stony sandy waste, flanked by low hills, I saw on the slopes of one of them nine Burrel (*Ovis Nahura*); but, as they happened to be all females, I left them alone, and did not attempt to stalk them.

Arrived at Phayang in the evening, amidst the usual braying of trumpets and beating of tom-toms.

May 26th.—Rode into Leh about 9 A.M. A mile from the town we were met by about twenty horsemen, who formed up behind us; and, when we reached the city gate and rode into the town, there was a guard of honour and a large crowd to receive us. We cantered up the main street, with the bazaar on each side, and eventually arrived at the Joint Commissioner's house, which had been placed at my disposal by the authorities in Kashmir. Here was a nice garden, with plenty of trees, but no flowers. At one end of the compound was

Prince Galitzin's camp, but not near enough to interfere at all with my people.

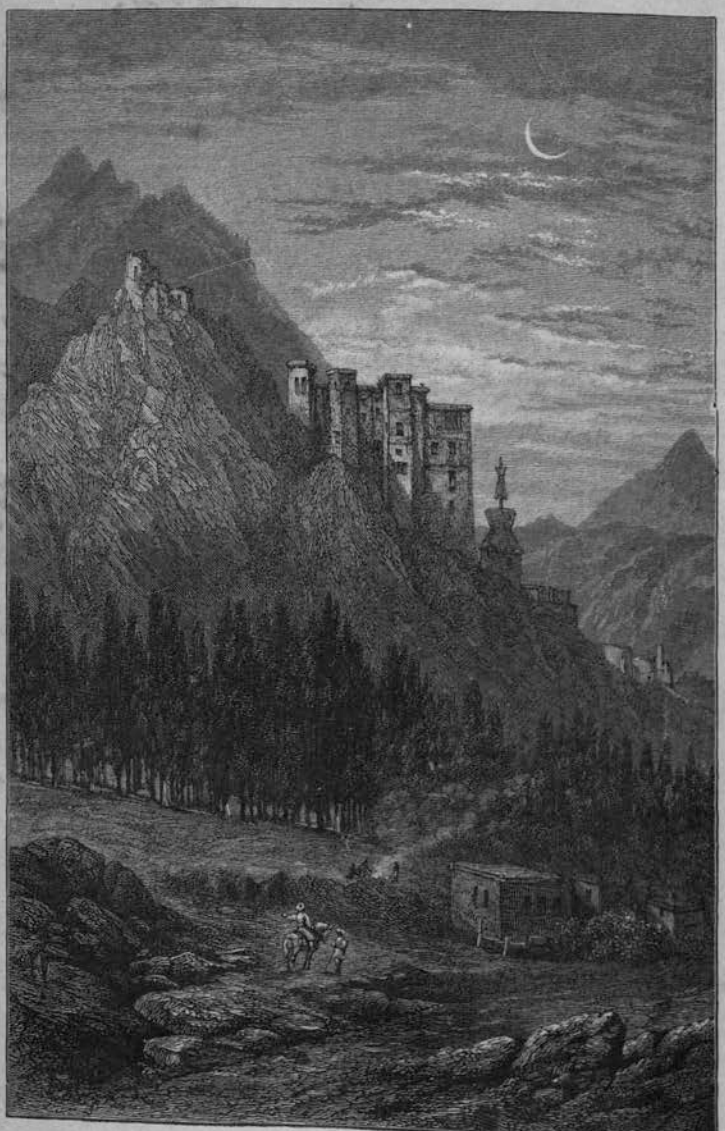
I soon made myself comfortable and quite at home in this bungalow, and after my caravan arrived had a great unpacking. We may be detained here for weeks, owing to the flooded state of the Shyok River, and the great amount of fresh snow on the Kardong Pass, which is not yet passable. I say *we*, because I have to-day heard that Roche is on his way up here from Srinagar.

The Munshi, Ahmed Din, who has been appointed to Kashgar, is on his way up to join me, as I have got leave from the Indian Government to take him on as interpreter through Chinese Turkestan, until he reaches his post at Kashgar.

The next four or five days passed without anything worthy of record, Leh not being rich in incident. Prince Galitzin made, in my opinion, a very bad bunderbust,* regarding his baggage-ponies between here and Yarkand, he paying a hiring price of 50 rs. per month per pony, for thirty extra ponies, having already nearly that number of his own.

I am trying to limit our requirements, in the shape of horseflesh, to fifty ponies, not including our own riding animals, and have determined, on my own responsibility—as Roche is not here to consult with—to purchase our lot, especially as ponies are very cheap here,

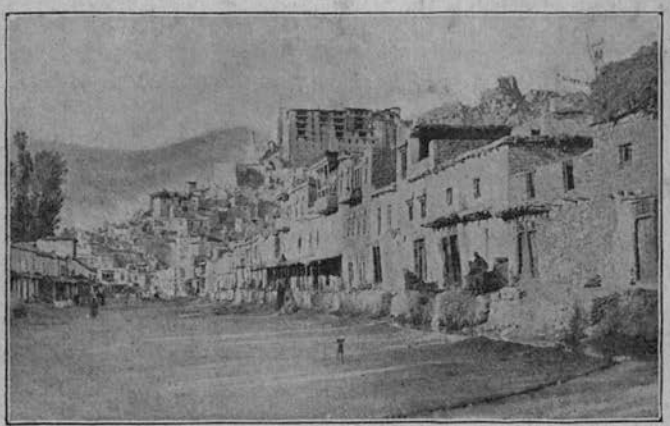
* Arrangement (Anglicised Urdu).



THE OLD PALACE, LEH. [*To face p.* 107, *Vol. I.*

so I began by buying eight ponies to-day for 347 rs., as I hope to be able to sell them at the termination of our journey.

May 31*st.*—Bought six more ponies at an average price of 43 rs. each. I had about twenty to choose from, but they were mostly too small. There is another lot coming to-morrow from some of the neighbouring villages.



A STREET IN LEH.

June 1*st.*—Prince Galitzin left for Yarkund *viâ* Changchenmo, as the Karakoram route is still closed owing to flooded rivers and passes blocked with snow. His cavalcade was most imposing with his armed escort.

Twenty-five more ponies came to be looked at, out of which I selected eight. One was a riding-pony for myself, in case the "General" is not able to stand the high

altitudes. The one I bought for myself is a cream-coloured strong cob, the property of Shemsadin, after whom I have named him. He was very expensive, costin me 80 rs. (or £5, at the present rate of exchange). Bishandass, the Naib Wazir, also sent me three yek-dans that he had, belonging formerly to poor Dalgleish. I purchased these, as we are in want of strong packing-cases to replace the flimsy kiltas of Kashmir, which have been already nearly knocked to pieces on the short and easy march between here and Srinagar. A very different style of article is needed for the marches we have got before us.

June 2nd.—Sent off Foontchuk and Shukker Ali, two men who have already been to the Pamirs, with orders to proceed to the Taghdumbash, avoiding Shadulla, or any Chinese outpost, and to let Tukta Mahamad know that we should arrive there about the middle or end of August. Tukta Mahamad is a Kirgiz, living on the Taghdumbash Pamir, and he knows all the best nullahs and places for the *Ovis Poli*. I bought them a pony to carry their kit, and having provided them with money, started them off on their adventurous journey, with strict orders to "keep their tongues between their teeth," and not to let any one know that there was a caravan to follow them later on, for if we are to reach the Pamirs at all, I expect it will only be accomplished by moving with extreme caution and avoiding all contact with the Chinese Military authorities.

Having heard that Roche camped last night at Phayang, only six miles from here, I rode out to meet him. He gave most fearful accounts of the cholera in Kashmir, over 300 deaths occurring daily in Srinagar, where all business is stopped and every one is flying from the town.

To-day the whole of my servants were carried off to prison and kept there, while search was being made amongst their clothes and baggage for 350 rupees worth of gold Bokharan tillas, which had been stolen from my money-box. One of these gold pieces was found in the clothes of "Fireworks," my *trusted* bearer, so I had him put in irons until he confessed that he had abstracted my keys one night in Srinagar, and stolen the money, thinking I should not miss these coins until I got into Russian Central Asia. I am now going to have him kept in irons until he refunds the whole sum to the Governor of Kashmir, to be held by him for me, and, after he has refunded, I expect he will get a year in jail. Most of these Indian Bearers, Kitmagars, Khansamas, etc., are the biggest thieves, liars, and rogues out. I am sending back all my servants as a lazy useless thieving lot; there is not one to be trusted. They all had the cool effrontery to tell me, *after* "Fireworks" had confessed, that they knew him to be a convicted thief of old, and that he had robbed me all the way up, in small ways. So I sent the lot off without characters, telling them I considered them as bad as the delinquent himself.

June 3rd.—Busy all the morning grooming our riding ponies, clipping their tails and heels, and smartening them up generally.

Had Mr. Webber, the head of the Moravian mission, here to lunch. He has lived nine years in Tibet, amongst Buddhists, and knows more about their religion than they do themselves. He speaks Tibetan perfectly; in fact, he preaches in that language every Sunday. I have had a great many long talks with him and feel I begin at last to understand a little the doctrine of Buddhism, as it obtains in Tibet; whereas, the scant knowledge I possessed on the subject of that religion before was entirely gathered from works that dealt with Buddhism as practised amongst the Cingalese; the difference between the religion of Tibet, which may fairly be described as Lamaism, and that of Ceylon, which may be called Buddhism, being very great.

The Buddhist faith was introduced into Ceylon 300 years after Buddha declared himself upon earth, and the Cingalese have kept their faith and religion much purer than the Tibetans. Here the people have, besides the word of Buddha, volumes of writings in which they have equal faith, and these are the productions of hundreds of Lamas. Ceylon has but one Buddha. The Tibetans are taught by the Lamas to believe in innumerable lesser Buddhas, of former Kalpas, and they also teach the coming of the fresh Buddhas in future Kalpas. In the books written by former Lamas, and treated

now as holy scriptures, are introduced old gods of Tibet, and on the frontier Buddhism is much mixed with Hinduism, many Hindu idols being found amongst the Buddhists, who inhabit that border-land. The Northern Buddhists know little or nothing of their co-religionists in Ceylon, and of the island itself, which they call "Lanka," they have most peculiar ideas. They believe it to be a very bad place, inhabited by beautiful female devils, who frequent its coasts, luring ships to destruction and saving the crews only to take them ashore to kill and eat them.*

Like all uneducated people, the Northern Buddhists, especially the Ladakis, are fearfully priest-ridden. From the cradle to adolescence, from youth to middle age, from middle age to senility, from there to the grave; the man is *never* free from the Lama. At his birth the Lama takes his horoscope, at his death it is the Lama who finds the way for him to that region in which his soul shall be reborn. Nothing in Tibet can be done without a Lama; from the ploughing of a field to the betrothal of a couple, for if the Lama, to whom reference *must* be made, pronounce them unsuited to each other, the marriage cannot take place. Such are the powers of the priesthood.

* To put an end to this ridiculous theory, which up to a very late date was implicitly believed by Tibetans, a German missionary wrote a book in Tibetan about Ceylon, which is now in great demand amongst the people.

CHAPTER X.

Tibetan Betrothal—Marriage Laws and Customs—Polyandry—Buddhist Religion—Minor Deities—Nirvana—Circles of Time—Doctrine of Immortality—and Incarnation.

THE betrothal of a Tibetan couple takes place much in the same way, and at the same age, as in the more civilized countries of Europe, except in the case of male children left orphans and possessed of a certain amount of property. Under these conditions the boy child, immediately after the death of his parents, is betrothed by his nearest relatives to some grown-up woman, who acts as his nurse during his childhood and as his wife when grown to man's estate. This custom would appear to our western ideas of matrimony a somewhat inconvenient form of procedure, and would in all probability materially increase the already onerous work imposed upon the judges of our divorce court, but in Western Tibet the system works admirably, inasmuch as a Ladaki may have, in addition to his first wife, two extra ones, whom he is at liberty to select of a more suitable age to his own.

All betrothals, after having been arranged by parents

or responsible relatives, are referred to the Lamas, who pronounce whether the destinies of the proposed couple are suitable. If the Lamas pronounce them unsuitable, then the engagement perforce falls through, and the projected union is given up. (A few Lamas might come in useful in Belgravia or Mayfair.) Marriages always take place in the winter, as the people are too busy following their agricultural pursuits in the summer-time to think of such things.

They have two classes of weddings, the formal and the informal, with this latter there is no Raktak, which answers to our trousseau. The Raktak comprises all the property the bride gets from her parents on her marriage. Sometimes it consists of a Peyrak only, the whole of the mother's worldly wealth being invested in the turquoises which adorn this peculiar headdress.

The chief idea of the bridegroom is to take all he can get, and with that object in view he goes in for a formal wedding, not with any conscientious scruples regarding respectability, but simply for the greed of gain. When a day has been fixed for the wedding, the mode of procedure is as follows. All the bride's relations meet at the house of her parents and the bridegroom's at his. The bride is called *Pakma* and her intended *Pakpho*.

Pakpho, attended by his *ngispa* or male friends, then starts off to her father's house to claim his *Pakma*, but when they arrive at the outer gate of the little courtyard, which every house with any pretensions to respectability

boasts, they find it locked. To gain an entrance, *Pakpho* must backsheesh *Pakma's* male relatives, who stand sentry over the door, behind which are concealed *Pakma's* bridesmaids and female relatives, who pounce upon the unfortunate bridegroom as he crosses the courtyard, beating him in jest with sticks until he produces more presents for them, when they open the inner door and allow him to enter. Then commences the eating, drinking of chhang, and dancing, but the bride does not appear. The revels are kept up all night, generally in the *makkang*, or kitchen, when the *korey*, or loving-cup, is handed round, being constantly replenished with chhang, by one of the bride's female relatives, who, armed with a stick, inflicts summary castigation upon any of the guests who attempts to shirk his liquor. The two eldest male relatives of the bride and bridegroom then proceed to extemporise an ode in song, one in praise of the bridegroom, the other setting forth all the virtues of the bride, and if one fails to reply to the other within a given time, he has to pay a fine. While this is going on, the bride's mother is hanging out the raktak on a rope, stretched across the kitchen, and the *ngiathectpa*, or best man, makes out an inventory in the interests of his client, the *Pakpho*, and then takes possession of the trousseau.

By this time it is generally approaching the small hours of the morning, and *Pakpho*, who has not yet set eyes upon *Pakma*, begins to get impatient, and the best man being deputed by his principal to demand the bride

casually remarks to her mother that, as it is getting rather late, he would be much obliged if she would hand over the young lady to him. The mother then protests that she has not the faintest conception where the bride is, as her *yatodzama*, or girl friends, have hidden her away somewhere. The *ngiatheetpa* then has to produce more backsheesh, before he can induce these young ladies to part with the bride who, now that the hour of parting has arrived, embraces the feet of her parents, brothers, and sisters, after which the *ngiatheetpa* places on her head a fur-lined velvet cap, called *shamskor-i-teebi*, over which he fastens the *khatak*, or scarf of salutation.

Then follows one of the most peculiar episodes in this strange ceremony.

The bride's horse is at the outer gate, but she is not permitted by custom to walk to it. She must be carried on the back of her mother's eldest brother, failing whom, her paternal uncle takes her on his back and mounts her on her steed.

The wedding procession is marshalled in the following order: First to ride off is the bridegroom and his best man, then follows the bride, accompanied by those of her relatives who are sober enough to get on to a horse, the rear being brought up by such of the musicians who are sufficiently drunk to play, for no sober man could possibly perform on a Ladaki trombone.

As the wedding party goes through other villages, on its way to the bridegroom's abode, the villagers come out

with gifts of satoo and ghee and dried fruit, the bridegroom touches these offerings and remits them, giving the offerers a small donation in return. On arriving at her new home, the bride is met by the ubiquitous and inevitable Lama, but she does not dismount. The bridegroom and best man then approach her and entreat her to get off her horse, but she, woman-like, refuses to dismount, and weeps copiously into the bargain. This goes on for some time, until this refractory young female is brought to her senses by the promise of a present of a horse, or two cows, or some goats, when she promptly dismounts, having got what she wanted out of her husband's friends. The bridegroom then leads her by the hand up to the head Lama, who reads from a book, held by a novice, while in his right hand he holds a sceptre and some grains of barley, and in his left hand a small bell and drum. He rings the bell, beats the drum, and scatters the barley over the heads of the young couple now bowed down before him. The bridal party then enter the house, where they find two mystic signs traced in barley on the floor, the work of the Lamas. *Pakpho* sits on one, *Pakma* on the other, and between them is placed a measure full of grain, in which is an arrow standing up, with a piece of butter on the arrow head. After drinking more chhang, the Lama sprinkles them both with holy water, and thus the religious part of this curious marriage ceremony is brought to a close.

For two days the wedding guests remain in the

house, which time is given up to dancing, drinking, and merriment. On the second day, the bride appears decked out in all her finery, and while she dances with the women, the bridegroom dances with his male friends, after which, they all disperse to their different homes. For seven days the newly married couple must remain at home, but on the eighth day they are equally obliged to start on a journey to visit and salute all their friends and relatives.

In the case where parents are too poor to afford all these marriage festivities, it is all arranged that the bridegroom shall come at night, and elope with his lady-love.

In all these rejoicings and wedding festivities, the younger brothers (or elder, as the case may be) of the bridegroom take no part, but bide their time, for as soon as the festivities have come to an end, they immediately, by law and custom, become partners in the bride, no matter whether the lady objects or not, neither can the husband say a word.

Thus does Polyandry go hand in hand with Buddhism all over Ladak, and the former custom prevails all over Western Tibet.

There are many cases in which three or four brothers all live together, and share the same wife. All children, born in this triple or quadruple wedlock, are considered the children of the brother who went through the marriage ceremony with his wife, but

a child speaking of his or her fathers, in the plural, would call the elder one *Aba,* or *Aba-chenmo,* the next one *Aba-parma,* and the youngest *Aba-chaungan.*

The first wife of a man is called *Changchhen,* and if after a specified time she proves childless, he is allowed by law, if he can afford it, to marry a second one, who is called his *Changchhugan;* if she also is barren, he may marry a third, and she is called his *Yangchhungan.*

As long as these three are alive, he is not permitted by law to take unto himself a fourth. If a man and his brothers have got in common three wives living, and all prove childless, they call into the family circle another man called a *Phortsak.* If he also is unsuccessful and begets no child, a second man is called in, who is termed a *Pho-chhungan.* In the case where this latter is no more successful than his predecessors, the original husband and wife must resort to adoption.

A man may marry into the caste below his own, whereas a woman can only marry into her own caste, or a caste higher.

In the case of an elopement, owing to the poverty of the parties concerned, no civil or religious marriage ceremony is performed at all, and this is not considered any drawback; in fact, in the case where the bridegroom comes into a little money through the death of a relative or otherwise, and makes up for

his former neglect, by giving a series of marriage festivities, which he does simply to gratify his own or his wife's vanity, it is not considered in the least necessary to have a religious ceremony as well, although, probably, chief amongst the guests at these "better late than never" wedding festivities, will be the Lamas of the nearest monastery.

The Tibetans call their religion by the name of ཆོས་ *Chhos,* which literally translated, according to Jäschke, signifies moral doctrine, religion in general, both theoretically and practically. ལྷ་ཆོས་ *Lha-Chhos,* the religion of deities, *i.e.* the Buddhist religion as the *only* true one, in opposition to all other heresies and false religions. Although, according to our European notions, we say they have no God, yet what they worship under the name of དཀོན་མཆོག་ (*dkon-mcóg*), pronounced *konchók,* is according to the literal meaning of the word, "*the most precious thing,*" for Buddhism has always sought the most precious thing, not in anything material, but in the moral sphere, looking with indifference—indeed with contempt—on everything merely relating to matter. It is not, however, moral perfection, or the happiness attained thereby, which is understood by "*the most precious thing,*" but the mediators who procure that happiness for mankind —namely, Buddha (the originator of the doctrine), the scriptures, and the corporate body of priests or Lamas.

This triad or trinity, the Buddhists call *Konchoksum,*

and although it cannot by any means be placed on the same level as our Christian doctrine of the Trinity, yet it will be easily understood how the innate desire of a man, to worship something supernatural, afterwards contributed to convert the acknowledgment of human activity for the benefit of others, into a devout, and, by degrees, idolatrous adoration of these three agents; especially, as Buddha's religious doctrine did not at all satisfy the deeper wants of the human mind, and as its author, himself, did not know any thing of a God, standing apart and above this world: for whatever is found in Buddhism, of beings to whom divine attributes are assigned, has either been transferred from Indian or other mythologies, and had, accordingly, been current amongst the people before the introduction of Buddhism, or as a product of philosophical speculation, that has remained more or less foreign to the people at large.

To the word དཀོན་མཆོག་ *Konchok*, can fairly be assigned the signification of *God*, inasmuch as the word suggests to every Tibetan the idea of some supernatural power, the existence of which he feels in his heart, and the nature and properties of which he attributes more or less to the aforementioned Triad.

In addition to this Triad, the Tibetans have endless minor deities. Lha is the generic term for Deity, but, literally translated, it means spirit or fairy. Thus

they have Lhas of the mountains, of the earth, the water, the woods, the fields, and a Lha, who watches over travellers, and also three household gods.

Of Goddesses (Hlamo) they have but few, the more important of which they call "Kandroma," which literally means, "walking in Heaven"; their path is the rainbow and their dress is supposed to be tinted with all its prismatic colouring. Chief amongst these Kandromas is the goddess "Drolma," and another Rdo-rje-pag-mo (Tibetan), वज्रवाराहि (Sanscrit), meaning "diamond sow," a Buddhist goddess frequently worshipped, and incarnated as Abbess in a nunnery situated on an island of the Lake Pab-te. She also has a sanctuary at Markula, near Triloknath, in Lahoul.

The heaven of a Tibetan Buddhist is hard to describe, for it must be remembered that, according to his lights, speaking of going to Heaven could only be rendered by him with the equivalent phrase of attaining or entering "Nirvana," མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས། yet, for all that, they have names for Heaven, viz. Namkha-Spa, the place where the saints are soaring, where birds are flying, where it thunders, and from whence comes the lightning, as the fifth element; Thoris or Od-sal, the everlasting abode of the spirits of the pious, or of those who had atoned for their sins, by remaining in one of the eighteen Buddhist hells, for a certain period. Korba is also used in this sense, viz. Korba-las-

daspa to escape from Korba, the orb of transmigration, which means, to enter into Nirvana. Korba is the round of transmigration, within the six classes of physical beings. Although the Tibetan Buddhist has not a more ardent wish than to be finally released from the repeated wanderings of the soul, yet he believes so firmly in these migrations, that he will rather follow the doctrines of his Lamas and doubt the reality of the perception of his own senses than think it possible that the whole theory of the Korba, with all its consequences, should be nothing but a product of human imagination.

When the soul of a pious man attains Od-sal, it does not mean for an instant that it has entered into Nirvana, but simply that it is a step in the right direction and that it is very much nearer Nirvana than any other place. But after remaining for a certain period in Od-sal, it must then be re-born into the Lama class, before it can attain Nirvana; *because only Lamas can enter Nirvana, the abode of Buddha.*

ཟློག་པའི་ *Nirvana.* (Sanscrit). In Tibetan, Stong-pa-nyid.

There have been many theories put forward by writers on the true interpretation of this word Nirvana, many, in fact most, of whom insist on its being a state of "absolute nothingness," of "utter annihilation," of "destruction," &c. &c. *I* will not be so bold as to

hazard an opinion on the subject, but I will give *Buddha's* own interpretation of the meaning, after which there can be but little doubt that the "annihilation" and "destruction" and "absolute nothingness" theories are all founded on false assumptions. The following is a literal translation from one of the holy books of Buddha that I got in Western Tibet:—

Once there lived a hermit not far from where Buddha then had his abode, * he was a very devout man and the people called him "the holy man." At that time Buddha was asked by his disciples: "How near or how far is this holy man from Nirvana," and Buddha answered them and said, "This holy man is not near and also not far from Nirvana, *but he has already entered into Nirvana.*"

Now we must bear in mind that in this case Buddha was talking of a *living* man, therefore, how can any one ascribe the meaning of "utter annihilation" or "destruction" to the word?

One of the meanings attached to the Sanscrit word Nirvana is to *expire* or *extinguish*, therefore many learned writers have advanced the theory that to enter into Nirvana must necessarily mean to expire into space, or to be extinguished and absorbed into space. But that can never be the right meaning of it, according to Buddha's own teaching.

* Benares.

Here is the *literal* translation of a passage in another of the holy books of Buddha :—

Buddha was once asked by a man, "What is Nirvana?" and Buddha answered him saying, "Nirvana is the destroying of all desires (lust), the destroying of all hatred and malice (envy), the destroying of all confusion, these, oh, my friend, must be called Nirvana!"

When Buddha had given this answer, he was again asked, "What is Holiness," and he answered holiness is the destroying of all desires (lust). Holiness is the destroying of all hatred and malice (envy); Holiness is the destroying of all confusion, these, oh, my friend, must be called Holiness."

(Therefore, according to the teaching of Buddha, Nirvana and Holiness are synonymous terms.)

In another of the holy books is to be found amongst the teachings of Buddha, the following sentence in the Great Teacher's own words :—

"The Disciple who has put away all desires, and the lust, is rich in wisdom, in this time he has found the *Redemption from the Death, and Rest, Repose, the Nirvana, the everlasting Place.*" *

* All these quotations are from the བཀའ་འགྱུར *Kan-gyur*. *Kan* signifying "the word of Buddha" (equivalent to the word Bible), and *gyur* signifying "translated."

This *Kan-gyur* contains 108 volumes of the word and teaching of Buddha.

The translations referred to were made by Mr. Webber of the

བསྐལ་པ་ KALPAS.

The Tibetan Buddhist thinks that the world goes round in a never-ending circle of *Kalpas*, which is a fabulous period of time.

There is *Kalpa-cenpo*, or the Great Kalpa; *Bar-gyi-Kalpa*, the intervening or middle Kalpa; *Bzanpo*, the happy or blessed period in which Buddha appears; *Bzalka-nampo*, the bad period; *Bzkalme*, the period of conflagration of the universe, as a punishment for the sins of mankind.

Like the Greeks, the Tibetans call the first part of Kalpa "The Golden Period," when, according to the teaching of Buddha, all people can go into "Nirvana," whereas, in the present sinful period, none can enter but the Lamas.

It is impossible to procure any information from Lama or layman, as to their knowledge or belief regarding the duration of a kalpa; but they say that long ago the age of a man extended up to 800 years; that since then his lifetime has gradually been shortened, till now his age rarely extends beyond eighty years, and that the present is the last of the life-shortening kalpas, and that, when a new period commences, the life of a man will gradually be lengthened to its former limits.

Moravian mission at Leh, who gave them to me. Mr. Webber has lived many years in Tibet, and speaks, reads, writes, and preaches in Tibetan fluently. He is also one of the greatest living authorities on Buddhism as it obtains amongst the Tibetans and in Lhasa.

Tibetans, as a rule, are strangely ignorant of everything regarding their religion, and never seem to bestir themselves in the very least towards learning anything more concerning it than the belief that when they die their souls will be dealt with according to their deserts, when the pious will attain Od-sal *en route* for Nirvana (after re-birth into a Lama), and the wicked will expiate their sins in one of the eighteen hells of the Buddhist faith.

In the Buddhist religious code there is no such thing known as *Eternal Punishment.*

གཉལ་བ་ *Dnyalwa, or Dmyalwa,* is the name they gave to *Hell* proper; but amongst the eighteen before-mentioned hells, are hot and cold hells, and various other forms of Gehennas. They imagine that, when the allotted number of re-embodiments has taken place, the *Sem,* or soul, should attain Nirvana; but, if owing to sins committed in this world, the soul is unfit for Nirvana, it has to go either into one of these hells to undergo purification, or into Od-sal to prepare for re-birth, according to the life led on earth by its possessor.

Yedags, or the fifth among the six classes of Beings,* is a sort of hell or living state of punishment, because

* The six classes are as follows:—
I. The Lhas, or Deities.
II. The Lhamayin, Demigods.
III. Mee, man.
IV. Tutro, animals.
V. Yedags, fabulous animals.
VI. Myalva, beings of hell.

the persons who are condemned to suffer as *Yedags* are represented as giants with huge bellies, but with long thin necks, like the hair of a horse's tail, through which sufficient nourishment can never pass to allay the cravings of hunger or thirst. These giants inhabit the air, and this suffering of perpetual hunger and thirst is only a grade of punishment preceding the final full torments of Dnyalwa.

ཚེ་མཐའ་མེད་པ * IMMORTALITY.

In regard to the doctrine of Immortality, the Tibetans have a curious legend, in which they thoroughly believe.

An angel once brought a pitcher filled with the "Water of Life" (Doort-shey-i-choo) down to the earth. One man drank a little of it, and in consequence, although he grew old and infirm, he could not die. The angel, seeing this, returned to heaven and reported the circumstances to the Deity, who came to the conclusion that immortality was not suited to this world. So he ordered the angel to remove the "Water of Life," and the angel fearing, if he emptied it out, some animal might drink it, took the pitcher containing the water to the top of a fir tree, where he fastened it to a branch and left it. A little while after, some crows began to peck at the pitcher and broke it, and spilled the "Water

* ཚེ་ tze (life) མཐའ་ mta (boundary) མེད་ med. པ་ pa. med-pa (not); literally therefore "not a boundary to life."

of Life" over the spines of the fir, which became from henceforward evergreen; at the same time the crows' beaks were also splashed with the Water of Life, the result being that a crow's lifetime extends over a hundred years.

སྤྲུལ་པའི་སྐུ *Strul-pai-sku.*

INCARNATION.

སྐུ Sku (Body), Tibetan **काय**, Sanscrit.

སྤྲུལ་པའི Strul-pai. The genitive case of stul (Magic).

In a special sense sku means the person of Buddha, whom philosophers represent in three forms of existence, called sku-ysum, **त्रिकायः**, viz.: cós-kyi-sku **धर्मकाय**; lons-spyód-kyi-sku, **संभोगकाय**, and spṛul-pai-sku, **निर्माणकाय** (Sanscrit). The first of these is the absolute Body—Buddha in the Nirvana; the second is Buddha in the perfection of a conscious and active life of bliss in the second world—Od-sál; the third the Body of *Transformation and Incarnation* is Buddha, in the third or visible world, as man on earth. These three are the Sanscrit names. This doctrine of *Incarnation* is the most important in the Northern Buddhist's creed.

The *Incarnations* of Tibet take place in the following manner. The *Incarnation* of a Lama must take place within forty days of his death. Therefore all male children of whatsoever caste or class, born within forty days after the death of a saint or Lama, can claim to be his *Incarnation.* When the boys are about four years

old, a great festival is held, at which it has to be proved which out of the lot is the real *Incarnation.* A collection of books and other articles belonging to the dead man are brought in, mixed up with books and other articles belonging to living Lamas. The boy that selects the property of the deceased is considered without a doubt to be the *Incarnation,* and is declared as such.

There is no doubt whatever that this ceremony is seldom conducted fairly, as the boy who is the son of the richest parents, invariably selects the right articles, for it is most important that the head of a monastery should be possessed of a certain amount of private fortune.

After the boy is declared to be the *Incarnation,* he is sent off to Lhasa, or some other seat of religious teaching, and when his education is completed, he returns home and is installed as *Skoochok.*

The three great *Incarnations* of the Northern Buddhists are those of Lhasa, Nepaul and China.

No. 1. The *Incarnation* of Srow-tsan-jam-po,* one of the two great half-divine Bodhisattvas of the Northern Buddhists, who more particularly is revered as redeemer and ruler of men. As king of Tibet, he was the first to introduce Buddhism into Lhasa. His Incarnation is the Dalai Lama of Lhasa.

* This king was deified by the Tibetans, in consequence of the many reforms he introduced; amongst others was the sending his minister, Thoumi Sambhota, to India, to procure an alphabet for writing.

No. 2. Jam-pai dbyans, the others of the two great Bodhisattvas of the Northern Buddhists, the Apollo of the Tibetan, the god of wisdom, and more particularly the tutelar god and civiliser of Nepaul, incarnated in Thoumi Sambhota, and afterwards in King Kri-sron-sdi-btsain, and others.

No. 3. वज्रपाणि. Rdo-rje-can, originally the *Indra* of the Brahmins, the Dhyani Bodhisattva of the Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya, was incarnated in the Emperor of China. He is always represented in idols or images as a sort of black, hideous, terrifying Deity, or perhaps more properly speaking a black devil.

There are in Ladak, or Western Tibet, four resident Skoochhoks, or Incarnations, who preside over the Monasteries of Spittuk, Tiksay, Phayang, and Reyzong. There is also an Incarnation belonging to Heymis, the largest and richest of them all; but three or four births back, when Ladak was conquered by Kashmir, Heymis Monastery became State property, therefore the Incarnation has always taken place at Lhasa.

FROM LEH, LOOKING S.E.

[*To face p.* 131, *Vol. I.*

CHAPTER XI.

Spittuk Monastery—Duck Shooting—Purchase of Ponies—Chinese Visiting-Cards—Polo—Lama Dance—Nautch—Sword Dance—Gigantic Figure of Buddha at Tiksay.

June 10*th*—We left Leh, Roche and I mounted on Aziz and Shemsadin respectively, bound for Spittuk Monastery, and accompanied by Mr. Webber, of the Moravian Mission, who had kindly consented to act as our interpreter. At the foot of the rock, on the top of which the monastery is built,* we were received with the usual complimentary music; this time it was the discordant notes of the monastic band, which, to educated ears, sounded more like the braying of a hundred Egyptian asses than anything else. The instruments, that were used to inflict this torture upon us, were very long ones, so long, indeed, that one end rested on the ground, while the performer stood up to blow at the other.

After riding up a very steep ascent, we were met at the door of the monastery by the head Lama, the

* I have noticed that all these monasteries in Western Tibet have been built on the highest points of the rocks, and at first sight they appear absolutely inaccessible.

Skoochhok being unfortunately absent. I was very much disappointed at this, for he is a very interesting incarnation, being the seventeenth Avatar of Bagoolah, who founded the monastery in the fourteenth century; he is moreover an educated man, and knows something about his own religion, which none of his subordinate Lamas do; in fact, they can barely read, and they certainly do not understand what is written, when they do manage to decipher the characters. There is this to be said for them, that, in the Tibetan language, there are two distinct kinds of writing; the holy characters in which the holy books are written, and the secular, in which the ordinary correspondence of every-day life is carried on.

We were taken first into a long low room, with a shrine at the farther end, in which was seated an idol, called Nam-shel, or "the precious stone from Heaven." In front of this image were rows of small brass and wooden bowls, filled with offerings of water. This custom is universal all over Tibet, and the idea of using it, strikes one as being full of merit, because, water being an inexpensive article, rich and poor alike, are enabled to use it as an offering, without giving cause for envy or jealousy.

All down the centre of the room, from one of the roof beams, hung a row of silken banners, painted in gorgeous but inoffensive colours, with pictures descriptive of the life of Buddha, from the very commencement.

On one banner he was represented in his princely robes, in the act of taking them from off his person, and surrendering all his share in the pomps and vanities of royalty, and of the world in general.

On a second he was depicted sitting under a tree,* at Benares, conquering sin, with devils, and evil spirits of all sorts, represented as flying away from him.

On a third, he was declaring himself to the world, as Buddha.

On a fourth, he was rising from sleep, which is supposed to be the actual signification of the word Buddha, and walking along by a river, a lotus flower rising up from the ground in the imprint of each footstep. There was a large lotus-tree in the corner of all the banners, the remainder of which were painted with different pictures representing various episodes in the life of Buddha.

From there we were taken into the Chhos Khang, or sacred room, sometimes called the book-room, as the Buddhist holy books† are all kept there. This room would answer to a chapel in any Christian monastery, for it is in here they assemble to read their Scriptures, and more often the writings of some Lama than the words of Buddha. In the centre of

* Every monastery of the Northern Buddhists has a sacred tree growing in some part of the grounds.

† Their holy books are long narrow slips of paper, or parchment, kept between two boards and then tied round with a thong.

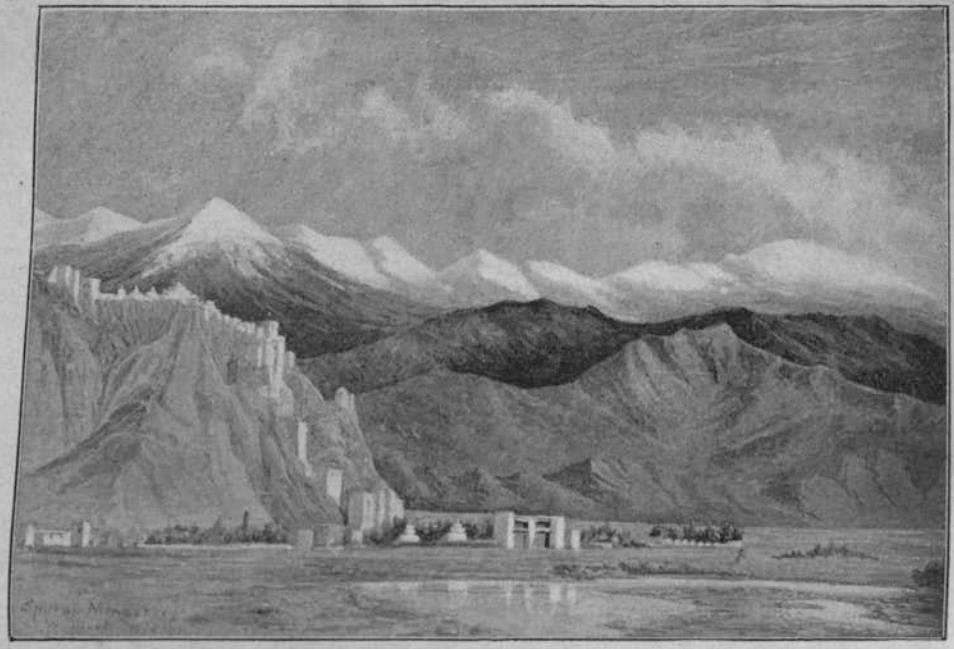
this room was a gaudily painted throne, on which sits the incarnation, and on his right is another highly decorated pedestal, on which sits a gilded image of Buddha.

In front of these two thrones, and at right angles to them, run two long lines of benches, on which sit the Lamas according to seniority.

At the back of these thrones is a long line of idols, representing all the other sixteen Skoochhoks, or incarnations of Bagoolah, in the centre of which is placed a huge golden image of Buddha, in a sitting posture, with the right hand resting on the ground.*

In front of these idols were rows of brass bowls, full of water, and in front of Buddha himself a gigantic bowl, full of rancid butter, in which was a small lighted wick, which burns for *one whole year*, after which the bowl is replenished, and if it emits for the other 364 days as nauseous a smell as it did on this *one* day, all I can say is, that the interior organization of a Lama must be constructed on an entirely different principle from that of the average human being, if he is able to prosecute his religious studies unaffected by the stench.

* Buddha is never represented in any other position than sitting cross-legged, with the right hand resting on the ground, and in front of him there is invariably the Rdó-rje ཏོ་རྗེ or thunderbolt, originally the weapon of Indra, but with the Northern Buddhists the ritual sceptre of the Lamas, held by them during their prayers and moved about in various directions, while in the left hand is held a bell. Darjeeling is derived from this word—Rdorjelin, the land of the thunderbolt.



SPITTUK MONASTERY.

[*To face p* 135, *Vol. I.*

In front of some of the idols were offerings made of flour and butter of all shapes and sizes, which reflect great credit upon the ingenuity of the originators and designers, notably in front of a very fine image of Sonkarpa,* was a design so subtle in conception, that it puzzled Roche and myself to discover the meaning that this extraordinary contrivance was intended to convey. He, after mature deliberation, was strongly in favour of its being a floral tribute, and did not hesitate at last to pronounce it a clever imitation of a basket of chrysanthemums, while I, on the other hand, had a strong leaning to the idea that it was a model of Canterbury

* Sonkarpa was the founder of the "Geylukspa," or yellow sect of Lamas, called occasionally by the Tibetans "Serpogon," or the wearers of yellow garments. The Dalai Lama of Lhasa, who, as I mentioned before, is the Incarnation of Sron-tsan-jam-po, King of Tibet, *and not of Buddha who can have no incarnation*, is one of these Geylukspas, or yellow sect, as is also the Incarnation of Sonkarpa. This yellow sect is as powerful in Lhasa and the surrounding provinces as the Drukpas, or red sect, are in Western Tibet or Ladak.

Sonkarpa founded the monastery of Trashilumko, the second largest town next to Lhasa, in which are located 4000 Lamas to this day.

He was born A.D. 1360, and belonged to the Amdo Tibetan race. At the age of seventeen he went to Lhasa, where he studied, preached and reformed and finally transmigrated into the person of Gédundrupa, and, according to Mr. Woodville Rockhill, in his book, the 'Borderland of China,' the Dalai Lama is an incarnation of his instead of Sron-tsan-jam-po's, King of Tibet. Mr. W. Rockhill says he saw, in a temple at Kumburn, three shrines, the central one that of Gautama Buddha, that on his right, Sonkarpa, and that on his left, Dipankara Buddha.

Cathedral. I have since had reason to believe we were both in error.

We finished our inspection of this very interesting monastery, after which we took our leave of the Lama who had shown us over, leaving with him a small donation, which will be applied, let us hope, towards the purchase of some more fragrant compound with which to keep alight the everlasting flame in front of the image of Buddha, than what is at present in use, and, turning our attention to affairs more mundane, went down to the Indus, in the hopes of being able to come across a few wild duck for dinner. After shooting for about two hours, we managed to pick up some teal, shoveller, and merganser, and we returned just before dark to our quarters at Leh, having made up our minds to try and organise a duck drive on a large scale, devoting a whole day to it. With that view, we shall ride down the river to-morrow, to see if we can discover any sort of place of concealment for ourselves, the river banks here being simply a broad shingly beach, almost flush with the stream, affording no sort of cover for the guns.

June 11*th*.—A lot of twelve ponies came to be looked at this morning; five extra good ones, but as they have put the price up, we refused to trade. We got, however, five cheap ones at between 37 Rs. and 45 Rs., which is an average of fifty shillings.

After lunch we rode down to the river, through the same old wild desert, desolate enough to look at certainly, but as beautiful in its wildness, as it is interesting in its utter desolation. Not a blade of grass, as far as the eye can reach, nothing but stones, rocks and sand, backed by the most beautiful mountains, which, considering they are but granite, and destitute of any verdure or timber, take the most lovely colouring, their shadows being as rich as their lights are delicate.

On reaching the river, we put up our horses at the little bungalow, which was built for the Joint Commissioner's use, and which we use as a fishing-cottage, and proceeded with our shikaris to select spots to place the guns. Finding absolutely no cover whatever, we ordered some small stone walls to be erected, behind which to conceal ourselves, and then explained to our two shikaris that the day we had the drive they were each to take some coolies: one lot to go four miles up the river, and the others four miles down; and to start at a given hour and drive the ducks, if there were any, over our heads; after giving which orders we rode home.

On arriving at the bungalow, we found a dak had arrived from Kashmir with some letters and papers for us, and the startling news that 3000 people had died of cholera in Srinagar alone.

Amongst our letters was a parcel post letter from Calcutta, containing a lot of Chinese visiting cards. One packet for Roche and the other for me.

The following is a specimen of one of the cards, the Chinese characters cut down to fit into this diary :—

敦摩	This is meant to represent "Dunmore."
伯爵	and this " " "Earl of."
一等	This " " "First Rank."
吏部尚書	" " " "President of the Board of Civil Office."*
英國	and this " " "English."

英國吏部尚書一等伯爵敦摩

Being Sunday, we did nothing but stroll about, and in the course of our wanderings we came across a graveyard, close behind our compound, which had up to this time escaped our observation. There are three graves in it.

* What the meaning of this designation is I am at a loss to say. The information I supplied the Chinese designer was as follows: (Name), Dunmore; (Rank), Peer of the Realm; (Profession), late officer of the Guards, or officer of Her Majesty's Household; (Nationality), English—and the above is the result.

One, surmounted by a large granite obelisk, contains the body of Ferdinand Stoliczka, who died at Murghu, June 19th, 1874, while returning from Yarkand with the Forsyth Mission, to which he was attached as naturalist (this obelisk was erected by government), while the other two more modest-looking slabs cover the remains of Herbert B. Turnor, late 71st H. L. Infantry, son of Mr. and Lady Caroline Turnor, who died in 1881, at Leh; and of Andrew Dalgleish, the Central Asian trader and explorer, born in Edinburgh in 1853, and treacherously murdered by an Afghan on the Karakoram pass, April 8th, 1888.

Next day was that of the great duck drive which we had organised with such care. Our two shikaris, accompanied by a dozen coolies, divided into two parties, one lot going up the river, and the other down. We sat patiently in our butts until the beaters arrived. Only one lot of ducks had been seen, and they flew the wrong way. So we never got a shot, and returned home sadder but wiser men.

In the evening we bought five more ponies, which brings us up to thirty-five.

June 16th.—Got news from the Kardong pass that our two men and one pony that we sent on ahead, to see what snow there was, were four days crossing it, and it took six extra men to get them through the snow. It is only thirteen miles from here (Leh), but it is

always a very difficult pass so early as this. It rises sheer up 6000 feet, and the summit is always in perpetual snow: it is said to be so steep as to be impracticable for ponies at any time of the year.

After lunch, we went to see a game of polo played in the main street of Leh, which is the bazaar; it is very long and narrow, and the ball was being perpetually hit into some merchant's shop, which seemed to upset the equanimity of the latter as little as it did that of the players, but it materially retarded the game, which was conducted in every respect on the same lines as the one I witnessed at Dras, and which I have already described.

The Naib Wazir had had a house prepared for us, with a balcony overlooking the street, so Roche and I and Mr. Webber, the Moravian Missionary, sat in armchairs, as spectators of this strange scene; the inevitable band facing us, on the opposite side of the street, and plying pipe and drum with more vigour than harmony. When the match came to an end, Roche, who had already taken an instantaneous picture of the game while it was in full swing, photographed the players and their ponies in a group, with the band sitting in front.*

* I noticed that three of the musicians were in possession of silver instruments, resembling very large clarionettes; I therefore sent for these instruments, and found they were very old and made of massive beaten-out silver, beautifully inlaid with turquoises and Kashmir rubies. They had been handed down from father to son for years, until they came into the possession of their present owners, who refused to sell at any price.

In the evening at nine we went to see some Buddhist dancing, which took place in the garden of the Naib Wazir, who met us, accompanied by torch-bearers, and escorted us to a Shamiana, in which carpets had been spread and chairs placed for us. Thus sat we in state.

The *mise-en-scène* was really very picturesque, and apart from the rest of the performance was well worth the visit.

In front of our Shamiana was an open space, surrounded by trees and in the centre a large altar, on which blazed an enormous wood fire, which five or six men kept continually feeding with huge logs. All round this open space sat or stood the entire community of Leh, gentle and simple, all dressed out in their bravest attire, for if there is one thing more than another that delights a Tibetan it is a Lama dance, and the flambeaux of the torch-bearers, together with the flames of the wood fire, lighting up the trunks of the trees and casting a ruddy glow upon the swarthy faces and picturesque costumes of the natives of both sexes, made a really striking picture and one not easily forgotten.

But now the band strikes up, the monastic band this time, and half-a-dozen Lamas come skipping into the arena. They were Lamas from the Spittuk Monastery, in gorgeous silk-flowered costumes, much resembling the old-fashioned dressing-gown of forty years ago, and wearing masks of most grotesque designs, and the dance

they danced was called a religious dance; it was neither graceful nor amusing, but rather resembled the efforts of an inebriated person to walk straight, and with the same results, and after gyrating round the altar, principally on their heels, they brought this senseless dance to a close and retired to change their dress, re-appearing a few minutes later in still richer robes of silk, embroidered all down the front with cabalistic signs, and on the back with red devils, green snakes, and variegated horrors of all sorts. On their heads they wore hats which were exaggerated imitations of those of the Spanish Toreador, with this difference, that on the top of these Buddhists' hats were fixed fan-shaped trophies of peacocks' feathers, fashioned in the likeness of a small hand-screen.

To this second dance it is impossible to give any other definition except that of a "walk round," for, intrinsically, it possessed neither merit in step, nor grace nor rhythm in motion, the sole gestures being made with the hands, and those members even could not keep time with the feet.

But, if the first dance of these Lamas was grotesque, what epithet can be applied to the ludicrous spectacle they offered when they came in to execute the third dance, wearing masks representing the heads and horns of stags, yaks, etc., and imitating the habits and movements of these animals, chasing each other round the altar, butting at one another, and perpetrating

various other tomfooleries, which, however puerile they may have appeared to us, evidently seemed to afford intense satisfaction to the spectators!

The religious (?) part of this extraordinary performance was brought to a close by this dance of the animals, and the Lamas and their band disappeared.

And now commenced the secular part of the entertainment.

First to appear on the scene were five youths, gorgeously attired in full flowing robes of blue flowered silk, with red sashes, and on their heads large gold conical crowns, somewhat resembling enormous extinguishers.

After shuffling about on their heels in an inane manner for about the space of five minutes, they were joined by fifteen women, in the usual garb of the Tibetan dancing-girl (as before described by me at the Kharboo nautch), and together these idiotic individuals waddled round the fire, before an admiring circle of friends and relatives, who applauded them as loudly and in as appreciative a manner as if they had really done something very clever. When these waddlers had waddled sufficiently for their own private satisfaction, they simply dropped out of the circle one by one and sat down, and this went on for about twenty minutes, until there was left in the arena but one coryphée, one who gloried in the consciousness that she had danced them all down, and, as she passed us in all the "abandon" of her art, the fire shed a full light upon her face, and we realised

at last that this nymph was nothing more nor less than an old lady, aged about seventy, and that the applause which greeted her was more or less of a sarcastic nature.

After this came a Baltistan dance, performed by some half-a-dozen Balti men, which was rather amusing, especially in the case of one dear old person who, had his lines been cast in other places, would most indubitably have become a shining light on the low-comedy stage.

The whole performance was brought to a close by our old Jemadar going through a species of sword-dance. He began by walking round the circle with two naked swords under his arms, suddenly he seized the two hilts with his two hands, as if he himself was seized by some sudden frenzied fit, for he tore round the arena at a most tremendous pace, making complete revolutions the while, like a dancing dervish, whirling these two swords round his head, cutting and flashing them about in a most reckless manner, utterly regardless of the safety of the spectators, who ducked and dived and tumbled about to escape being cut down by the old lunatic, who nevertheless was loudly applauded, and five minutes afterwards was walking home in a most prosaic manner in front of us carrying a lantern.

June 17th.—Sehr Singh, one of my servants, and a Hindu, came this morning to inform me that he wished

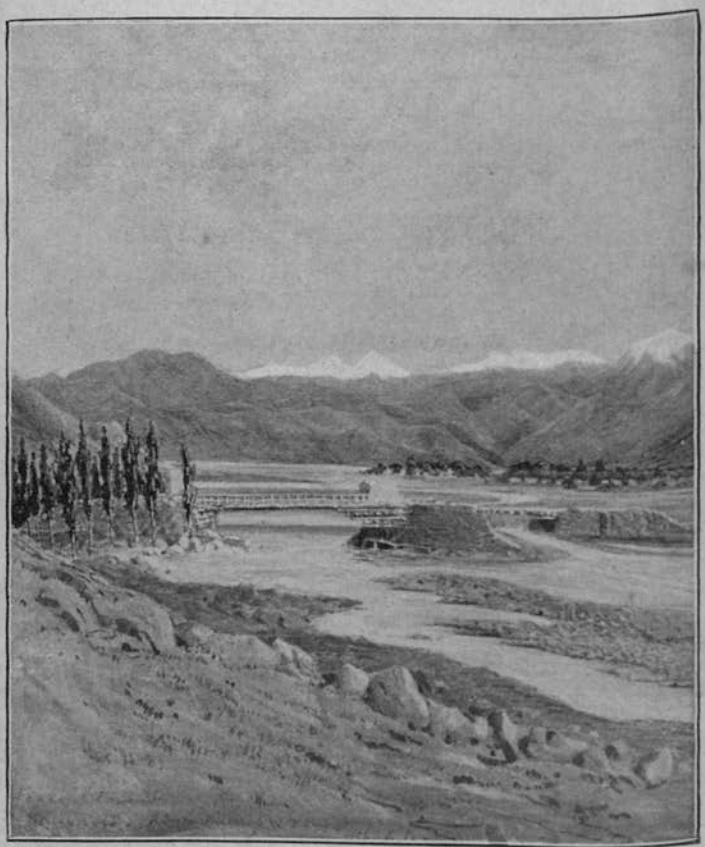
to change his religion and become a Mahamadan, and on my asking him his reason, he coolly informed me that as he was a low-caste Hindu, and all our other servants were Mahamadans, he could not associate with them on the march, but that if he became a Mussulman, they would eat with him and associate with him also. Thinking this a very sound argument, I did not attempt to dissuade him, but left him to his own devices.

After breakfast Roche and I rode about seven miles to the old disused monastery of Tiksay, up the Indus valley, to see a gigantic gilded figure of Buddha. I believe this idol has been measured and found to be thirty-seven feet high, but I am not sure, and we could not measure it ourselves. It is now enclosed in a temple which it has all to itself, and, beyond the usual flame in the rancid butter, and the rows of brass bowls full of water, in front of the image, there was absolutely nothing to see in the place; so Roche and I returned to Leh, both very much of the same opinion, that we had had a ride of fourteen miles, through a desert, under a hot sun, for nothing. The monastery in which this figure is placed is the private property of the grandson of the ex-Rajah of Ladak, who lives over the Indus, in a so-called palace, in a village called Stoke; which we have named Stoke-upon-Indus.

On our return we met a figure clothed in spotless white, and this turned out to be none other than my servant Sehr Singh, who was just returning from the

Mosque, where he had been received into the bosom of the Moslem Church, and what was much more to the purpose, I expect, as far as he was concerned, he was entertained by all the other servants at a feed in the evening.

June 18*th*.—Lieutenant Cubitt, the new Joint Commissioner, arrived from Kashmir. Roche and I rode out to meet him, and we all breakfasted at the Moravian Mission, with the Webbers. Having settled some time ago to visit the Heymis Monastery, we laid a dak of ponies, sending on four this afternoon, meaning to start to-morrow.



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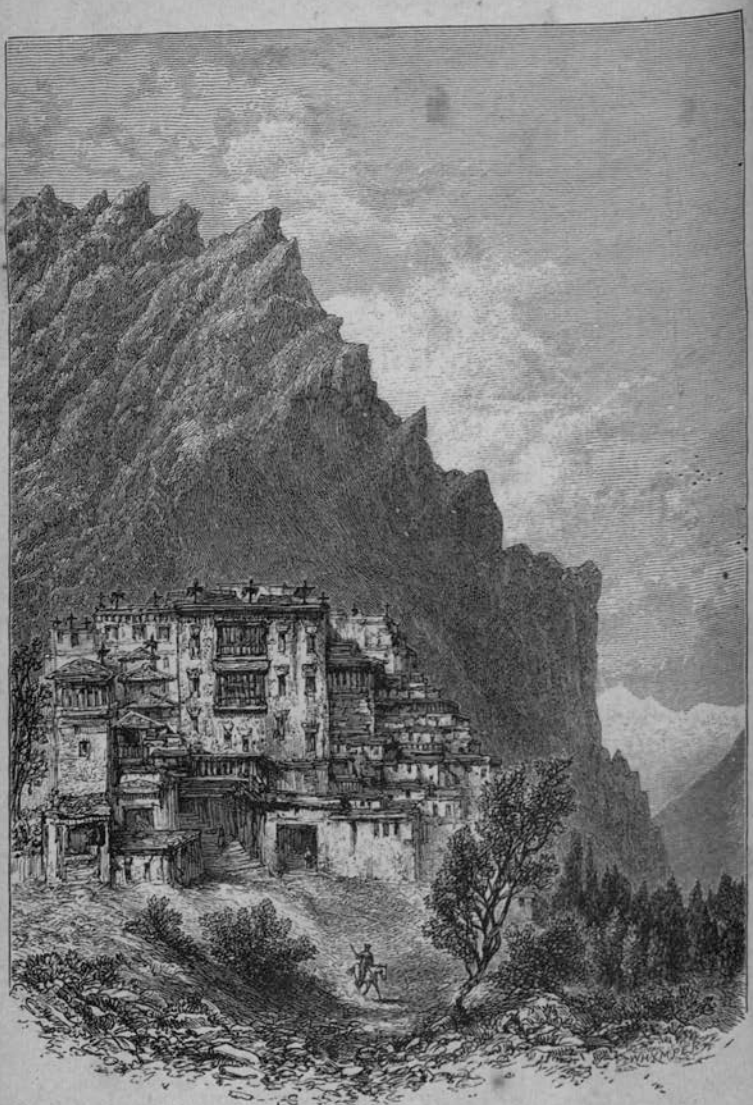
LOOKING TOWARDS SHUSHOTI, INDUS RIVER

CHAPTER XII.

Heymis Monastery — Grand Panoramic View — Description of Monastery — The Incarnation — Uncomfortable Quarters — Return to Leh.

June 19*th*.—We left Leh early, and after crossing the Indus and skirting the long straggling village of Shushote, turned our horses' heads south-east, and entered into a desert country, through which we rode for two hours, until we reached the first place to which we had sent on a change of ponies. Here we took our breakfast, after which we continued our journey up the stony valley of the Indus, which flows through more wild and uncompromising-looking wastes, encircled by high rugged mountains without a particle of vegetation, and changing horses again about twenty miles from Leh, arrived, after seven hours' riding, at the foot of the nullah up which is situated the great Monastery of Heymis. We were met by the superior of the monastery and by the Naib Wazir of Ladak, who had gone ahead the day previous, and, accompanied by them and their escort, we rode up the steep ascent leading to the monastery, threading our way through an intricate mass of Manis

Chod-tens, tombs and monuments, until we reached a series of terraces which served as small fields or gardens for corn and vegetable produce. Through these flowed a little mountain stream of beautiful clear water, which came brawling down the hill, bustling about over rocks and boulders and running off here and there into artificial channels at various levels, for the purpose of irrigating these patches of cultivation and watering the roots of the young poplars which fringed this picturesque little stream. Over terrace upon terrace, for some 800 feet, did we ascend, until we reached the great gate of the Monastery, where we were received with the usual Monastic welcome, which always includes more or less discordant music. On dismounting and turning round to look at the gorge up which we had just ridden, I was almost struck dumb with admiration at the magnificence, I may say the well-nigh unrivalled splendour, of the panorama which lay before me. Looking down from our vantage-ground of 12,450 feet above the sea-level, over the rocky gorge and over the stony valley of the winding Indus, the eye could roam over seemingly countless ranges of hills, until it rested on the mighty Changla, whose many and varied tops, clothed in the spotless garb of eternal snow, showed dazzling white against a clear blue sky, the purity and depth of colour of which no painter could ever hope faithfully to portray. To the right of these giants, the not less important peaks of the Changchenmo Range reared their snow-clad heads into the cloudless



THE LAMASARY HEYMIS. [*To face p.* 149, *Vol. I.*

firmament, while to the left rose those of Kardong Tayor and Nangasago, and their brethren of the Shyok and Nubra valleys, the whole of this precipitous line forming the southern wall of the great range of the Eastern Himalayas, which formidable barrier divides Western Asia from the great Chinese Empire, and to cross which we are to make our first effort on Wednesday, ours being the first caravan to make the attempt in 1892, by the Sassihr and Karakoram passes.

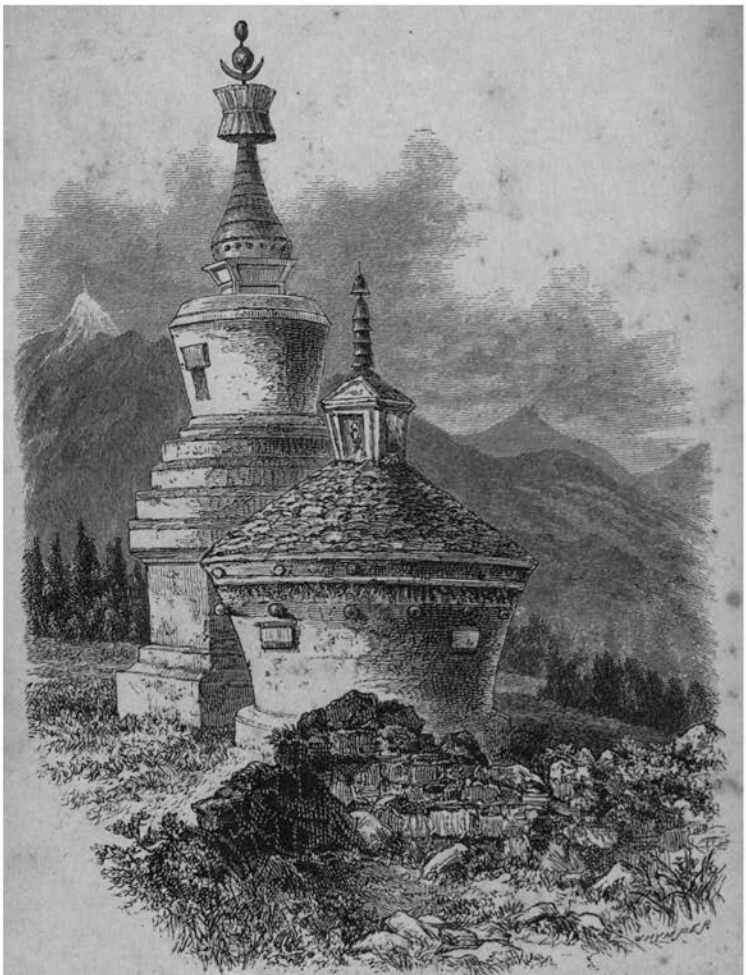
After feasting my eyes on this grand spectacle, I followed the others into the monastery, up various dark and steep stone steps, through countless passages devoid of light or fresh air, until at last we found ourselves in a large square courtyard full of Lamas; one side was taken up entirely with the "largest prayer-wheel in the world," over which a sort of house had been built, but I could get neither its dimensions nor its age from any one of the Lamas. As to its age, it cannot certainly be contemporaneous with the monastery, the oldest portion of which, was built in the thirteenth century by Staksungrdopa. The present Superior or Hlóbon of the monastery, has a craze for bricks and mortar, and as the monastery is the property of the State, and is the richest of all the Buddhist monasteries in Western Tibet, he is able to satisfy his taste for building, having plenty of funds available for the purpose. The consequence of this is that the building resembles a small town,

there being accommodation for upwards of five hundred Lamas, in the small out-houses, built on the rocks behind, and right and left of the main building.

The first place he took us into was the Chhos-Khang, or "sacred books room," which really answers to our word Chapel. This room, which was almost open to the sky, was surrounded by two tiers of galleries, supported on thirty-six wooden pillars, painted red. From the balconies of the galleries depended banners of white silk, while the walls were painted with images, which savoured more of the Hindu gods than the Buddhist.

In the centre stood the throne of the Incarnation, on one side of which was a shrine containing an idol, representing Chod-pa, and at the back a huge idol of Duparimpoché, an ancient and pious Lama, who is often worshipped, being now deified.

From this Chhos-Khang, we were taken into a second, very like the first in design, but containing many more idols and images, in the centre of which stood a really handsome Chod-ten of pure beaten silver. Its base, consisting of a pedestal about six feet square and four feet high, was inlaid, in the most lavish manner, with turquoises, Kashmir rubies and various other gems; while the edges of the five steps, which led up to the base of the Chod-ten, were of pure gold. In this room was also a gigantic gilded image of Buddha, at whose feet were reposing a tigress and



[*To face p.* 151, *Vol. I.*

CHODTENS, NEAR LEH.

her cub. The next gigantic figure, which I took to be that of a woman, turned out to be that of a god called Serpakmet, and next to him was a very curious image of Sindamone of the three heads, not three heads placed in a line on the one neck, but three heads one on the top of the other. The first head, which joined the neck, was in proper proportion to the body, on the top of that was a smaller one, and on the top of this latter, a still smaller one. Facing this peculiarly headed deity, was the chief Hlamo, or goddess, amongst the Kandromas, worshipped by the Buddhists, under the name of Drolma, the many-eyed. This was a beautifully fashioned idol, and "rich and rare were the gems she wore;" round her neck, her arms, her waist, above her elbows and round her ankles were chains, necklets, anklets, and girdles of pearls, turquoises, coral, etc. In the centre of her forehead was the first extra eye, besides her proper eyes; in the palm of each hand, and on the sole of each foot, were four more eyes, while in a large glass box constructed something like an old sedan-chair, sat Nardungnamgol, a bearded Lama of olden times, who has also been deified, and is now worshipped less as a saint than as a god.

Next to him was a Hindu god (so mixed up have these Northern Buddhists become with their gods, owing to their being brought so constantly in contact with Hinduism) called Tarloknath, over whose head

hung banners of flowered silk, on silver ground, and festooned over the heads of this row of deities were thousands of what they call in Tibetan, "Nurboo," which are simply oyster-shells made in silk.

Leaving this most interesting Chhos-Khang, we went down many winding passages; along the walls were dozens of little niches, containing prayer-wheels, round the inside cylinders of which were tightly wrapped thousands of prayers. As he passed each wheel, the Lama who conducted us turned it with his hand, and by the time we passed them, they were all spinning away merrily, as if they enjoyed this devotional exercise. At last we came to the door of the third Chhos-Khang, ornamented with a pair of very handsome brass knockers. On opening this door, we entered a room with two galleries, supported on the same red wooden pillars as before, the galleries running round the room, and the roof being open, all but some matting coverings. In this Chhos-Khang, was a large image of the founder of the monastery, and on his left an equally large idol of Buddha himself, while to his right was a famous old Lama, deified under the name of Gialthas. Opposite these three deities, was a row of lesser lights, mostly Hindu gods again, the central figure being that of the celebrated Hindu god Gurulashirvitaykit, a hideous red image with three burning faces, six arms, and four legs.

THE PRAYER WHEEL.

[*To face p.* 152, *Vol. I.*

From there we proceeded to the fourth church, and this time our road passed through a courtyard, in which were chained up the monastery dogs, savage-looking brutes, who barked loudly at us as we passed. In this fourth place of worship, were two very fine silver Chod-tens, similar to those in one of the other Chhos-Khangs, also richly inlaid with turquoises and gems and all round the walls were holy books, being long strips of parchment, enclosed between two oblong wooden boards, and tied round with leather strings; in this room alone were upwards of ten thousand of these sacred books, it was in fact the library of the monastery. Here the sacred and everlasting flame flickers and stinks in its bowl of rancid butter, under the noses of Turjay Sumbra and Turjay Chung, two pious Lamas of days gone by, who stand sentry, on each side, over another image of Buddha.

The fifth room we entered was kept always as a holy guest room for any head Lama from Lhasa, whose business took him either to Heymis or other monasteries in Western Tibet. This room was fitted up entirely in the Chinese style, the writing on the walls, as well as the carvings on the pillars, being all in those characters. Round this room were seventy-eight niches, containing seventy-eight images in red clay, of seventy-eight defunct Lamas, whose ashes were said to be mixed with the clay.

From here we went to see the most interesting feature

of the whole monastery, namely, the "Skootchok," or Incarnation of Staksungrdopa, the founder of the monastery.

He is a very intelligent-looking child of eight years old, and was brought here from Lhasa (where he was born), about eight or nine months ago. He was dressed in a red conical cap, lined with yellow silk, and a yellow silk dress trimmed with fur; on our entrance into his sanctum, he was sitting cross-legged on his throne, playing with a Lhasa terrier, something like a skye. Over his little legs was thrown a handsome blue silk wrapper, and he reclined on silk cushions of Chinese manufacture. In his right hand he held the "Rdorje," or sceptre, and on a gilded shelf, in front of his high red throne, were cups of silver and brass. On his right was a green and red open-work sort of table with shelves, on the centre shelf of which was a mysterious-looking red box, on another shelf at the back were China vases, full of artificial flowers, and to the right of the flowers a very handsome silver water-bottle, with peacock's feathers standing straight upright out of the lid. The background of this very interesting picture was formed of silk banners, with pictures of Buddhist deities, and some Chinese embroideries, while close to the child's hand were narrow bands of green and white silk, hanging in festoons. As we came in, some of our attendants, who were of the Buddhist faith, advanced to the throne on which this little boy was seated, and inclining their

heads in a deep obeisance, kissed his feet, he touching their heads with both his hands, and, while they remained in this half-prostrate position, the little Incarnation took down a green ribbon from off the festoon and, tying a knot in it with his own little holy fingers, presented it to them. We made our bows and asked if the incarnation would like to be photographed, and after a deal of haggling and our promising to send two pictures framed to the monastery, one for the Incarnation himself and one for the Lamas, they consented, and Roche took two photographs of him, after which we departed, the little boy offering us green ribbons, which we accepted.

Roche and I slept in the monastery, sharing the same room, which had a hole in the ceiling up to the roof and open air; the window looking north was an open balcony, without glass or shutter, ditto the window looking south. So we much regretted not having brought our tents. We lit a fire, which smoked us clean out of our room, and altogether we were most miserable. We lay down in our clothes and spent a wretched night in a thorough draught. The next day we returned to Leh, arriving in time for a cup of tea with the Joint Commissioner before dinner, which we took at his hospitable table, and the next day was spent in making preparations for our start.

CHAPTER XIII.

Start for Central Asia—Camp under the Kardong Pass—Effects of the Rarefaction of the Air—Yaks—Snow-storm—Crossing the Pass—Kardong Village—Refractory Ponies—Crossing the Shyok River—Nubra Valley—Tibetan Almanack.

June 22*nd*.—This morning we adjusted the pony loads, having weighed them all ourselves so as to equalise them. In several cases, as the Yakdans were over weight, we had to re-open them, take out some of the heavy stores, replace them with lighter ones, and so get each piece of the heavier baggage as near as possible to uniform weight of a maund and a quarter, in order that no pony should carry more than two maunds and a half, which will be quite enough over the high passes and through the snow. As we know the Kardong pass to be still deep in snow, we have got seventy yaks altogether; thirty-two for the baggage (as ponies are no use over the pass); thirty-five to "make a road"—that means to go unloaded in front of the baggage animals and tread down the snow—and three for our own riding.

After dispatching the heavy baggage to Laoche, where we camp to-night, at the foot of the pass, we went round to bid farewell to our kind friends the Webbers,

and after partaking of our last meal in a house for many weeks to come, we got on our ponies and started for the camp, Cubitt, our host, riding part of the way with us.

We mounted up from the 11,680 altitude of Leh to 15,680, the foot of Laoche, where, 2400 feet above us, rose the great pass, all covered with snow. We could barely find a spot on which to pitch our tents, so stony was the ground. The effect of the rarefaction of the air at this place was most oppressive and I felt it very much. In fact I was working with a pick-axe making a hole in which to sink my tent-pole, when I suddenly felt quite light-headed and so giddy that I fell face forward on the ground. The slightest exertion was impossible.

That night I got no sleep, and we found the difficulty of breathing most irksome, lying down made me worse, so I sat up all the night, as we were to make a start at 4 A.M.

June 23*rd*.—After swallowing a cup of tea and two raw eggs, we made a start. The morning was dark and gloomy, the sun not yet being up, and soon it began to snow. Wrapped up in Tibetan fur caps, Poshtin coats, etc., we mounted our ponies and rode part of the way up the pass until they became so distressed, suffering from the effect of the rarefaction of the atmosphere that they could not continue; mine wanted to lie down, and it was quite painful to hear them labouring for breath,

poor animals, so we mounted the yaks, and a more uncomfortable means of locomotion I never felt. As we neared the top of the pass, the snow-storm increased in violence, and the snow was up to the bellies of the yaks in some places. At one difficult place the breast-plate of my yak broke, so saddle and I slipped gracefully over his tail, and he went on rejoicing at being relieved from his burden, and left me lying in the snow. I thereupon mounted another yak, as walking was quite impossible at that altitude in such deep snow, and after an arduous ascent, the top of the pass was reached exactly at 7 A.M. The snow-storm had cleared away and the sun came out and the view from the top was magnificent. Roche and I each took the altitude, his aneroid making the height 18,280, and mine 17,980 feet.

We also had out the thermometer, which only registered 10 degrees of frost, which surprised me, for, as my beard and moustache were hard frozen, I thought it would have fallen much below 22 degrees. Notwithstanding our being at an altitude of over 2000 feet higher than the top of Mont Blanc, neither Roche nor I felt any discomfort like last night, in fact we remained at the top for half an hour waiting for our stragglers, during which time he took two or three photographs and I made an attempt at a sketch.

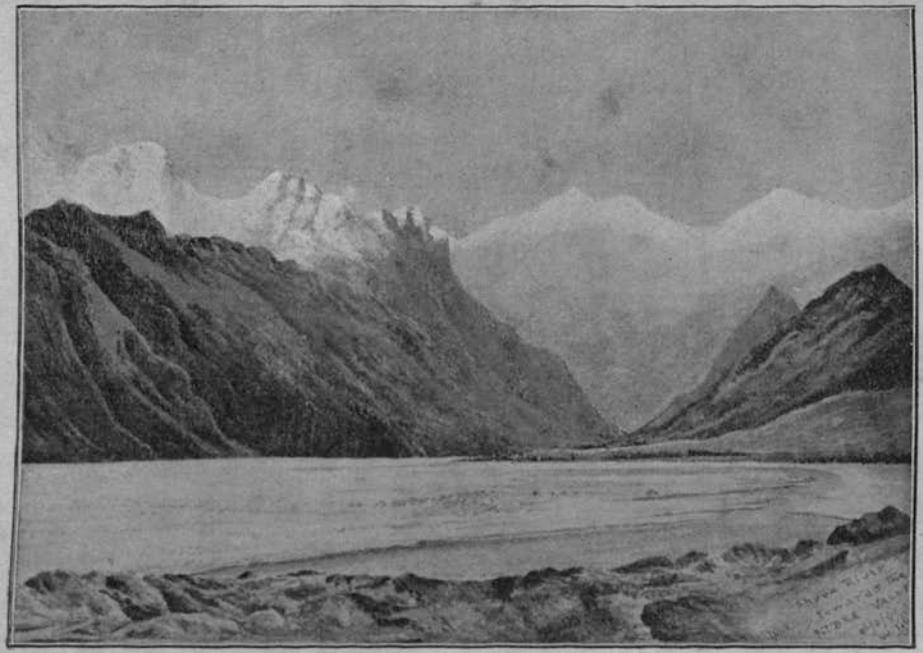
At 7.30 A.M. we commenced the descent, which was very much worse than the ascent, inasmuch as we rode

up, but riding down was impossible, even on the nimble and sure-footed yak, and walking distressed us very much. The first 1200 feet was over a rather steep glacier, which luckily for us was deep in snow. Down this glacier went first the thirty-five unladen yaks, to tread down a path, then came the ponies, then the laden yaks, followed by ourselves on foot, armed with long iron-shod sticks like Alpine-stocks. It took me exactly an hour to reach the foot of the glacier, and taking out my aneroid, I found it registered 16,780 feet. I found breathing easy enough at 18,000 feet, as long as I did not move, but walking ten yards distressed me very much. When we got out of the snow we mounted our ponies and continued descending all the way to Kardong village, fourteen miles. The Kardong river rises in the pass, and we followed it all the way, riding down its left bank; and when we got out of the snow, we came upon a small flock of the *Ovis Nahura* feeding apparently on stones. After looking at them through the stalking-glass, we left them alone, as they were all females. The fourteen miles from the pass to Kardong village lay through a wild and desolate country, without a particle of vegetation. We were very glad when we arrived, as we had been constantly on the move for fifteen hours that day, which had been a trying one to men and animals. We settled therefore to halt at Tsati the next day, which is a short march of twelve miles, especially as we do not know how our ponies will behave with their loads for

the first time, neither do we know how long it will take to swim them across the Shyok river.

Poor little Punch, Roche's Irish water-spaniel, is very ill to-night; the cold seems to have affected his lungs, as he has great difficulty in breathing. Altitude, 13,480 feet.

June 24th.—Had an awful job with some of the ponies this morning, three of them absolutely refusing to be loaded. After throwing blankets over their heads to blindfold them and tying up their fore-legs, the men at last managed to get the loads on their backs, but as soon as ever the blankets were removed from their heads, and their fore-legs were free, they made the very best use of all their legs and bolted over the most awful rocks and stones near the camp, falling down and spilling their loads and kicking things to pieces. Luckily we had some spare ponies on which we put the loads, and we got off with very little damage done. Our route lay by the side of the Kardong river all the way until it joins the Shyok. For the first two miles we were shut into a deep narrow gorge, whose precipitous sides rose some hundreds of feet from the little river. The path was frightfully steep and very rocky, so we all had to walk. Later on we emerged from this narrow gorge and followed down the valley in which vegetation commenced again. On each side of the river was a fringe of bushes, name unknown. They resembled the oleander in growth, the *Cupressus macrocarpa* in leaf, and



SHYOK RIVER, NUBRA VALLEY, W. TIBET.

[*To face p.* 161, *Vol. I.*

their pendulous flowers, sometimes pink and sometimes purple, were like the flower of the *Ribes*, or flowering currant. These bushes were very pretty, growing in some cases as high as fifteen to twenty feet, the wood is dark red and similar to the red willow in bark. Freely interspersed amongst these were huge bushes of wild roses in full bloom, each bush literally covered with flowers; I never saw such rose bushes or such a wealth of flowers as they bore. The last eight miles before arriving at the junction of the little Kardong river with the Shyok, lay through most beautiful scenery; its very wildness was its greatest charm, and when at last we emerged from our little glen, into the great wide expanse of the Shyok valley, I saw at a glance that the Shyok was a most important river. It flows through banks of shingle like the sea beach, and when in flood it covers the whole valley, which is over a mile wide and all shingle and sand.

We swam our ponies across, having previously removed the loads, which we took over with us in a flat-bottomed boat, something like a Thames punt, but propelled by paddles, and after reloading the ponies we made a fresh start for our camping-ground. As we had arrived without any serious *contretemps* to delay us, we found we had the whole afternoon before us, so we organised a hare drive in the small jungles round the camp and edge of the river. Having procured about twenty beaters from the village of Tsati, near which we

were camped, we put them into the jungle, and we went on to the end. In the first drive we saw one chikore and four hares, but failed to kill anything.

In the second and subsequent drives we killed six hares, which will be very useful for hare soup. We are down at an altitude of 10,680 feet now, and have seen flies for the first time since crossing the Zoji-la.

June 25th.—Roche and I shot our way down the river bank for about five miles, killing some more hares for the pot. The scenery in this great wide immense Shyok valley is more beautiful than anything I have ever seen in my life. The vastness of everything is so striking, and there is an eloquence in these grand solitudes that makes itself felt.

After riding for about ten miles we came to the entrance of the Nubra valley, where the river of that name joins the Shyok, and here the scenery is quite magnificent, and on an enormous scale, larger than anything even in the Rocky Mountains of America. We passed through a veritable little oasis at Tirhet, which is well irrigated and as green as water can make it. We rode through sandy lanes with trees overhanging the track, hedges on each side and wild roses in profusion, enormous bushes simply smothered in flowers. We came from a stony desert into this little Paradise, rode through it in ten minutes, and emerged on the other side back into the same stony desert again. We rode up the Nubra

river as far as Saumur, where we found our camp ready pitched in a charming spot, under some enormous apricot-trees. Before going to bed we had to witness a nautch, danced in our honour round a large wood fire in front of our tents. As it was precisely the counterpart of the Leh and Kharbu nautches already described, I need make no mention of it. It was over by 10 P.M., when we were very glad to get to our beds.

June 26th.—Roche and I went out early to get a few more hares, and after killing enough for dinner, we mounted our ponies and rode up the Nubra valley to Panamik. Our path lay first through stony wastes, then through shady lanes and gardens of wild roses and apricot-trees and the greenest of green fields, and then out again into the desert. I walked through as good a field of peas to-day as could be seen in any county in England. The fact is that there is little or no water in this part of the country, but when the natives can find it and turn it on to the land, everything grows in the wildest profusion. The consequence is that after riding perhaps for miles through a stony wilderness, you come all of a sudden upon a small irrigated spot, with two or three or more houses, and perhaps 100 to 150 acres of apricot orchards and small fields of corn, enclosed by hedges of wild roses and in some cases hedge-row timber, principally willows, whose branches meet over the lanes between the orchards, forming a shady arch, which

is most grateful to the traveller after the blinding glare of the desert. The sun is very powerful in these parts; to-day it was 98° in the shade, at 11 o'clock.

June 27th.—Panamik being the *Ultima Thule* of civilization, we shall remain here to "re-fit," cast those ponies which have turned out badly, purchase other ones, lay in stores for man and beast, and collect yaks for the next series of passes, our late yaks having been dispensed with at Kardong village. Finding that pony hire is very expensive here, we have settled to buy them right out. Our caravan must of necessity be a large one. After leaving here we shall not see a house, a human being, a blade of grass, or a stick of timber, until we cross the whole range of the Eastern Himalayas, Ice Mountains, Kuen Lun, etc., and arrive in Chinese territory, and there it is very doubtful if we can find provisions without going on to Yarkand. There may be provisions to be had at Shahidula, but we wish if possible to avoid that place, as there is a fort and a Chinese outpost and they may have orders to stop our going to the Pamirs, therefore we must take at least two months' provisions with us. As our caravan already consists of twenty-four souls and thirty-eight horses, and we require six more men and twenty more horses, we must have two months' provisions for both. We must also carry firewood with us. To enable us to do this, we were thinking of hiring eighteen more ponies, to carry provender for

the thirty-eight and themselves and provisions for the men, but finding the natives here ask twenty rupees, from here to Shahidula (twelve marches), per pony, we refused to pay it. We were told that, as Captain Younghusband in his last explorations paid that sum here for hire, therefore we must. The natives, on being asked what year that was, could not explain, except by saying it was the year of the "fire hog," or the "water monkey," or some absurd name of that sort. The fact is that the Tibetan almanack is the most complicated affair and certainly cannot be recommended on the score of simplicity.

It is divided into what they call *Loskars* and *Rabjungs*. The former is a period of twelve years, and the latter a cycle of sixty years.

Each of the twelve years that go to make up a Loskar has its own name and represents an animal of some sort, for instance :—

The 1st year is called Byce, or the Mouse year.
The 2nd year is called Hlang, or the Ox year.
The 3rd year is called Stak, or the Tiger year.
The 4th year is called Yoo, or the Hare year.
The 5th year is called Druk, or the Dragon year.
The 6th year is called Breel, or the Snake year.
The 7th year is called Sta, or the Horse year.
The 8th year is called Lug, or the Sheep year.
The 9th year is called Sprey, or the Monkey year.
The 10th year is called Oia, or the Bird year.
The 11th year is called Khee, or the Dog year.
The 12th year is called Phok, or the Pig year.

The cycle of sixty years is a much more elaborate reckoning, commencing from A.D. 1026. The Hindus have a distinct name for each year of the cycle, but the Tibetans have adopted the Chinese nomenclature, which is formed by employing the names of the twelve animals aforesaid, with the names of five elements, considered as both male and female alternately. The five elements are: one, wood; two, fire; three, earth; four, iron; five water. The first element, one male and female, is coupled with the first two animals, next with the 11th and 12th, and so on, by which means the change of names is preserved throughout the whole series.

Translated into English, the names are as follows:—

1. Wood Mouse.	13. Fire M.	25. Earth M.	37. Iron M.	49. Water M.
2. Wood Ox	14. Fire O.	26. Earth O.	38. Iron O.	50. Water O.
3. Fire Tiger.	15. Earth T.	27. Iron T.	39. Water T.	51. Wood T.
4. Fire Hare.	16. Earth H.	28. Iron H.	40. Water H.	52. Wood H.
5. Earth Dragon.	17. Iron D.	29. Water D.	41. Wood D.	53. Fire D.
6. Earth Snake.	18. Iron S.	30. Water S.	42. Wood S.	54. Fire S.
7. Iron Horse.	19. Water H.	31. Wood H.	43. Fire H.	55. Earth H.
8. Iron Sheep.	20. Water Sh.	32. Wood Sh.	44. Fire Sh.	56. Earth Sh.
9. Water Ape.	21. Wood A.	33. Fire A.	45. Earth A.	57. Iron A.
10. Water Bird.	22. Wood B.	34. Fire B.	46. Earth B.	58. Iron B.
11. Wood Dog.	23. Fire D.	35. Earth D.	47. Iron D.	59. Water D.
12. Wood Pig.	24. Fire P.	36. Earth P.	48. Iron P.	60. Water P.

"Therefore, if a person in a dog year says that he is Byi-lo-pa, it may be guessed by his appearance whether he is 10, 22, 34, or 46 years of age, and then also in other cases accidental circumstances must help to determine the precise date of an event." *

* Speyra Ladáki (Ramsay).

CHAPTER XIV.

Panamik—Purchase of more Ponies—A Pathan and his Monkeys—Caravan Completed—Death of Punch—The Vanguard Pass—Tulumbati Glacier—Stopped by an Avalanche—Camp at Frozen Lake—The Sassihr Glacier and Pass.

June 28*th.*—The natives brought us thirty-one ponies to-day, from which we were to select eighteen or twenty for *hire*, at the same price, twenty rupees each, for twelve marches over the high passes. That amounts to over forty rupees a month for each pony. Forty rupees is about the value of a pony to purchase. We absolutely refused to stir out of our tents, even to look at them, and sent Ahmed Din to tell them we did not require any more baggage animals, and that therefore they might take them all away. Shortly after this the head-man of the village said that we might have them on hire at a much cheaper rate, but we having made up our minds to purchase them right out, if we could get them at a fair figure, absolutely refused to parley with them. So we went out with our guns and had a very nice afternoon's sport, killing lots of hares and one chikore.

June 29*th.*—Things look better to-day, some of the

natives having informed Ramzan, our head-man in the caravan, that they *would* sell their ponies. They commenced by asking sixty and seventy, even up to ninety rupees for one, but after a long haggle we eventually became possessors of eighteen ponies, at the moderate sum of 900 rupees. Our stud now amounts to fifty-six. The whole afternoon was spent in shoeing the new purchases, making new pack-saddles, etc.

Amongst our followers we have some very handy men. One is a capital durzi, another an excellent dhobee, a third a very fair baker, two or three good blacksmiths and shoeing-smiths, one carpenter, two shoemakers, one mason, etc., and they have already proved themselves very useful adjuncts to the caravan.

We have engaged five new pony-men for our new purchases, and four coolies to carry all the tent-poles, as they will not go on baggage ponies over these precipitous passes, and neither Roche nor I will hear of having them cut in half and jointed with iron, for with the first gale of wind they would snap like carrots.

As there is a store here to supply caravans with corn for horses and flour, etc., for men, we made our calculations as to what we should require to take with us from here, and bought 33½ cwt. of corn for the horses; five cwt. of flour for the men; 1½ cwt. of flour for ourselves; 20 more sheep, to drive with us, and ½ a ton of wood for cooking purposes.

We have also with us 3000 horse-shoe nails, 420

extra horse-shoes, ice axes, hatchets, picks, shovels, spades, carpenters' tools, etc., and we may have to turn navvies pretty often, as we hear that between Shahidula and the Taghdumbash Pamir, "a mountain has fallen in and blocked a river and turned a nullah into a lake (*sic*)," so we shall probably have to make a track for ourselves. It is evidently not a very pleasant country to pass through, as it is marked by Captain Younghusband on the map of his explorations: "Country depopulated, owing to Kunjuti raids."

We shall be a pretty strong party, but our men are not supposed to be armed, as the Chinese object to armed escorts crossing their frontier; still, we can serve out a certain amount of rifles to those of our men who are accustomed to handle them. Our own batteries amount to five rifles, three guns, and two revolvers. Roche's rifles are, one rifle (500) by Holland, another (400) by Holland, and two guns. My battery consists of a double breech-loading rifle (577), Cogswell and Harrison, a ditto Paradox by Holland, and two Henry rifles, one single-barrelled (450), the other double (360), and as to ammunition, we have enough to last us more than a year.

June 30th.—Very busy our last day getting all the loads sorted and equalised again. The 33½ cwt. of corn for the horses, the firewood, and the navvies' tools are reserved for those baggage-ponies, of whose manners we

are not quite sure, so that if they do bolt and spill their loads, like some of them did at Kardong, they cannot break anything. I tried one of the new purchases before breakfast this morning, a chestnut which we had named Panamik. I rode him down to the enclosure, where some forty of our ponies were turned out to graze, about half a mile from the camp. It was a lovely spot near the river, full of thorn-trees, wild rose bushes, and excellent grass, with a stream running through it. It was like a miniature park. The sun was so hot I rode down in my shirt-sleeves, without coat or waistcoat, and on my return found the thermometer at 98° in the shade, in the early morning, too. We had a tremendous storm in the night, so we congratulated ourselves upon being where we are and not having started, as, had we been encamped in an exposed situation, we should undoubtedly have had our tents blown down; as it was, we trembled for our ridge-poles. *Altitude of Panamik*, 10,980 feet.

July 1*st*.—Just before we struck our tents a tall gaunt apparition, accompanied by four monkeys, walked into our camp, and asked permission to speak to us. He turned out to be a Pathan, who had been so successful in selling some performing monkeys to the Chinese in Yarkand last year, that he determined to make another venture, and hearing that we were going that way, had come to entreat us to allow him and his

monkeys to accompany our caravan, as he could not travel that distance all alone. So we took pity upon him, and agreed to let him come with us as far as the Chinese frontier, where we hope to turn off, and from there he must make his own way to Yarkand.

Poor little Punch, Roche's Irish water-spaniel, was very bad to-day at starting, so we put him on a baggage pony. He has never got over the severe cold he caught crossing the Kardong pass.

Having bade adieu to Sadik Ju, the old Kardar of Nubra, who has accompanied us since the crossing of the Shyok river, and has during that brief period absorbed into his rheumatic old bones a good deal of our Elliman's Embrocation, varied occasionally with Holloway's Ointment, we marched out of Panamik, and as our caravan is now complete, and after to-day can be neither augmented nor decreased, I will here mention the names of the men who form its *personnel* and the number of yaks, horses, etc., which we take with us.

Besides Roche and myself, there are thirty men, as follows:—

Ahmed Din (Munshi), acting as interpreter; Ramzan (Tibetan), head-man of caravan; Nebra (Kashmiri), shikari; Rahim Sheik (Kashmiri), shikari; Mohamed Du (Kashmiri), 2nd shikari; Sehr Singh (Sikh), dhobee; Subhanah (Kashmiri), acting as kitmugar; Islam (Tibetan), pony-man; Karam (Tibetan), pony-man; Rassoul (Tibetan), cook; Chota Islam (Tibetan), pony-man and

durzi; Sedik (Tibetan), pony-man, and shoemaker; Sukkur Ali (Tibetan), pony-man, and shoeing-smith; Goulam Rassoul (Tibetan), pony-man, and shoeing-smith; Foontchook (Tibetan), pony-man, and shoemaker), Tashisounum (Tibetan), pony-man, and shoeing-smith; Rassoul (Tibetan), pony-man, and shoeing-smith; Sunnam (Tibetan), Sunnam Rinchu, and Abdullah, pony-men, and Jumma (Tibetan), who was with Captain Bower in his late explorations in Tibet, and returned to Leh, *viâ* Shanghai and Calcutta, just in time to join our expedition.

The other eight are novices, *viz.* Sunnam-Gaufohr, Foontchuk 2nd, Toonduf Sehring, Lobseh Tashi, Toonduf Sennis, Lekspah, and Sunnam Staufel.

The yaks are sixty in number, but they are hired for the Leshkya, or Vanguard pass, the four-mile glacier of Sassihr, and the Sassihr pass.

The ponies are fifty-six in number, classified thus, viz.:—Riding-ponies, six; baggage-ponies, twenty-eight; ponies to carry food for men and horses, eighteen; ponies to carry firewood, four.

Baggage includes eight tents, thirty beddings, camp-furniture, stores, carpenters' tools, medicine chest; navvies' tools, horse-shoeing tools, 3000 nails and 420 horse-shoes, guns, rifles, ammunition, spare saddlery, our own kit and that of thirty men; kitchen utensils, scientific instruments, photographic apparatus, etc. An outfit intended to last till the spring of 1893.

Therefore, counting in the hired yaks and their

attendants, we marched out fifty-one men and 130 live animals, not taking into account the latest addition to our live-stock, viz. four monkeys.

After we had crossed the first river, we came upon a very likely-looking small jungle for game, so dismounting we shot our way through it and rejoined our ponies at the other end, the richer by seven or eight hares. So eminently successful was Rassoul's first attempt at making a dish of jugged hare, concocted from a recipe given to me by Mr. John Hargreaves of Leckhampton Court, that we determined to take as many hares as we could along with us, jugged hare not being a dish to be despised. After remounting, we rode through eight miles of rocky desert, with the sun beating down upon our heads, with scorching heat.

It was more like the heat of the plains of India than the temperature one would expect to find at an altitude of nearly 12,000 feet above the sea-level, and it affected several of the men. I myself, although wearing a solar topee and double puggaree, got a touch of sun. As to poor little Punch, he succumbed altogether, and died about the middle of the march. Poor Roche was terribly cut up about it. We took his body on to Changlung, where he was buried.

About 4 P.M. we came to the Tulumbati river, which was almost a dry bed when the first portion of the caravan crossed it in the early morning, but as we were several hours later than them, owing to our shoot-

ing, and to poor little Punch's death, and other causes of delay, the heat of the sun had melted the snows and the river was in full flood and rather risky to cross, as we did not know the depth; but we got across in safety, although two or three times I thought the ponies would be swept off their legs, and we should have to swim.*

CHANGLUNG, W. TIBET.

It was rather bad for those of the men on foot who had had slight sunstrokes, having to wade through the snow-water considerably above their waists, and

* At this time of the year, when the snows are melting, it is scarcely possible to cross any of the small rivers in this country, in the middle of the day or afternoon, although they are easily fordable up to 9 A.M. in the morning.

the result was some cases of fever in camp that night, which we doctored with quinine. Altitude of Changlung, where we camped, 11,180 feet.

July 2nd.—Started early, as we had a very hard day before us. Our camp of last night was situated at the foot of the Karawal Dawan, which is 15,700 feet high. It has more than one name; the natives call the pass at the summit, "Leshkya-la," but it is generally known as the "Vanguard Pass," and is reckoned one of the steepest and most difficult in this region of high passes. From our camping-ground we went up a very steep ascent of over 4500 feet. Ponies of course were out of the question, and the yaks had to be used for the baggage as well as for our own riding. Even they were quite done long before we reached the summit, and it was consequently a very slow performance. There were one or two extremely awkward places, that I never could have imagined any animal could negotiate, but somehow these yaks seem to be possessed of six legs, for when they fall they pick themselves up again before you have time to realise that they have been down.

The view from the summit was very fine, looking both ways, north-east and south-west. The sun, even at the top of the pass, was oppressively hot, and we were quite glad of a breeze which sprang up, and coming off over the snow was deliciously cold.

Roche and I each took the altitude, and there was a difference of nearly 300 feet between the marking of our aneroids, although, when we compared them at the foot of the mountain, before we commenced the ascent, there was only fifty feet of difference. By his aneroid, the summit was 16,020 feet, and by mine a few feet over 15,700. (These aneroids vary in the most incomprehensible manner.)

The view looking north-east over the country we are about to traverse, though grand, was more peculiar than beautiful. Great high yellow sandstone mountains, their pinnacled tops of the most curious formations, and needle-shaped peaks, too sharp-pointed for snow to lie on, ending in long shelving banks of sand and stones, that sloped down to the Tulumbati or Tutialak river, which flowed at their base. The descent was less precipitous than the ascent on the southern side, and we might have ridden our yaks down, but we preferred walking, especially as we felt no discomfort at all from the rarefied air, although some of the natives did.

The top of the pass was strewn with bones and skeletons of horses, which have perished on the march. We counted seven dead horses, lying just over the summit, where we commenced our descent, and as the flesh was on most of them, they must have been part of some ill-fated caravan, which got caught in the snow in attempting to cross the pass too early in the year.

After a ride of six hours and a half through a wild, stony valley, following the course of the Tulumbati river, we arrived at the foot of a large glacier, and there we camped. We retired early, as Roche had a touch of sunstroke to-day, and was suffering a good deal from his head. Altitude, 15,100 feet.

July 3rd.—It poured most of the night, when it was not snowing. The ground was white when I looked out of my tent this morning, and snow was falling gently. By 7 A.M. the storm cleared off, and the sun came out and dried the wet tents and enabled us to make a start for the great Sassihr glacier, but whether we could cross it or not to-day was a question. Having fortified ourselves with tea, made with melted snow, which much resembled pea soup, we mounted our ponies and rode by the edge of the Tutialak glacier, and by two others, one of them of great extent, about six miles and a half in length. We then came to a frozen river, which we had to cross, so we sent a man on to the ice on foot, with an ice-pole to test the strength of it, as there was a lot of rotten snow on the top; and as we could hear the water running underneath, we had no particular wish to make any nearer acquaintance with it. Barring one bad place, where one of our men and his horse went through, the crossing was pretty firm, and we got over all right, walking and leading our horses.

It now came on to snow in earnest, and it got colder and colder as we ascended. We saw some very curious birds, the like of which neither Roche nor I had ever seen before, both small and large. They were as tame as possible, especially a species of pigeon, larger than a blue rock, with a beautiful fawn-coloured breast and almost a fan tail of dark blue and white. Four of them flew in front of my pony, and kept stopping every now and again, sometimes on the ground, at other times sitting on a rock and taking stock of me and my pony "Panamik." We were now at an altitude of 17,000 feet, and all among frozen rivers, frozen lakes and glaciers, the whole way for miles, therefore I was much astonished at finding flowers growing all amongst ice, snow and gravel. I passed four species; one was a small purple foxglove, another was so like a violet that I mistook it for one, a third was a blue daisy, and the fourth a sort of yellow cowslip. I dismounted and gathered one of each as a specimen, but was so disgusted with the exceedingly nasty smell that each of them had, that I took no further interest in them. Animal life there was none, save only the birds already referred to, and an occasional raven, eagle, or chough. After riding past two frozen lakes we came to a dead stop. An avalanche had lately come down, and blocked our way, just before coming to a third lake, which being deeper than the others, was only partially frozen.

On our right were precipitous rocks, on our left the lake, and in front of us this great mass of snow. We debated for a long time what we should do, and at last we left the ponies in charge of one man, while we went cautiously over the snow, to see how much it would bear. Luckily it was well frozen, and as it

APPROACH TO THE SASSIHR GLACIER, W. TIBET.

bore us and there was no other road for us to take, we led the ponies over it in safety, and then there was a bit of the lake to cross to reach the other side, where we could see the track. We drove one pony into the half-frozen water, and finding it was not too deep, the others followed with their riders, and so we passed over in safety. All around us the noise of stones

and rocks being dislodged by the melting snows, as they came crashing down the hill-sides, was very weird. From this lake to the foot of the Sassihr glacier, there was no more riding. We had to walk and lead our ponies through endless drifts of snow, which, being frozen at the top and rotten underneath, buried the ponies sometimes up to the girths. Just as we reached the foot of the glacier a heavier snow-storm came on, so we could go no further, but camped by the side of a small frozen lake for the night, intending, if the snow-storm stopped to get up at 4 A.M. and cross the great glacier, the beginning of which lies close to us.

We were at a very high altitude for camping, 17,180 feet, and it was bitterly cold. The yaks came in very late with the baggage, owing to the snow-storm.

July 4th.—After a wretched night with no sleep for any of us, owing to the difficulty in breathing when lying in a horizontal position, we took a cup of tea at 4 A.M. and made an early start. About 6 A.M. the sun came up from behind the hills and warmed us a little. By this time we were well on to the glacier, where we found, to our consternation, three feet of fresh snow, which not only made it fearfully heavy going for the baggage yaks, but also rendered the glacier very dangerous, as it was impossible to see any of the holes, fissures, and crevices with which it abounds. Riding for us was out of the

question, so we all had to foot it, and a terrible time we had, always up to our knees in snow and occasionally (when we fell into holes) a good deal deeper, and this at an altitude of 18,300 ft. suffering from the extreme rarefaction of the air, hardly being able to breathe, with a burning hot July sun pouring on our heads, an icy cold breeze blowing in our faces, and a glare off the snow that, even through tinted spectacles, was most blinding. This lasted for eleven hours, for we had to ascend the glacier one mile, walk four more miles over the top of it, and then descend about 3000 feet, before we could get a camping-place out of the snow.

At one period of the march we came to a place which was impossible for horses or yaks to descend. It was a precipitous pitch of about 200 feet of frozen snow, the high walls of the glacier were on each side, and at the bottom of the pitch were some large rocks showing out of the snow. One yak went over before we could stop him, and slipping down perpendicularly, came on his head on the rocks below, spilling his load, but luckily not killing himself. We then put a lot of men on with shovels and picks, and made a zigzag road, and placing one man on each side of our improvised path at each turn of it, the yaks and ponies were passed from one man to another and so we got the whole fifty-six ponies and sixty yaks down in safety, but it took a long time. The icicles on some parts of the glacier were beautiful, and several times during the day bits of this huge ice

plain reminded me of some of the glaciers of Spitzbergen, in the Arctic Regions.

At one place there was a break in the glacier and we had to descend and ascend again on the other side, about 300 feet, in fact it was like going on to another glacier altogether, but it was all the same one, the rent being only the result of certain convulsions of Nature. This glacier is quite flat-topped and by my aneroid showed an elevation of 18,300 feet above the sea level, but by Roche's, it was 18,680 feet. The summit would have been easy walking but for the deep snow and the difficulty in breathing, but the descent was very bad, steep and rocky. The rocks embedded in the glacier and covered with snow were of course invisible, and therefore, as neither man nor beast had the slightest idea what he was walking over, the consequence was that every 100 yards or so, we came upon a yak buried up to his head in the snow, or a pony floundering up to his girth, or a man up to his neck, and sheep and baggage scattered about in the most promiscuous way. I lost sight of Roche, after our road-making on the first glacier; he went ahead and walked much quicker than myself, for he did not suffer from the rarefaction of the air as much as I did; in fact I suffered in my head also, as well as in respiration, as did several of the others, especially Ahmed Din, who, having had a touch of fever the night before, was trying to ride a yak and consequently got a bad fall, hurting his hand.

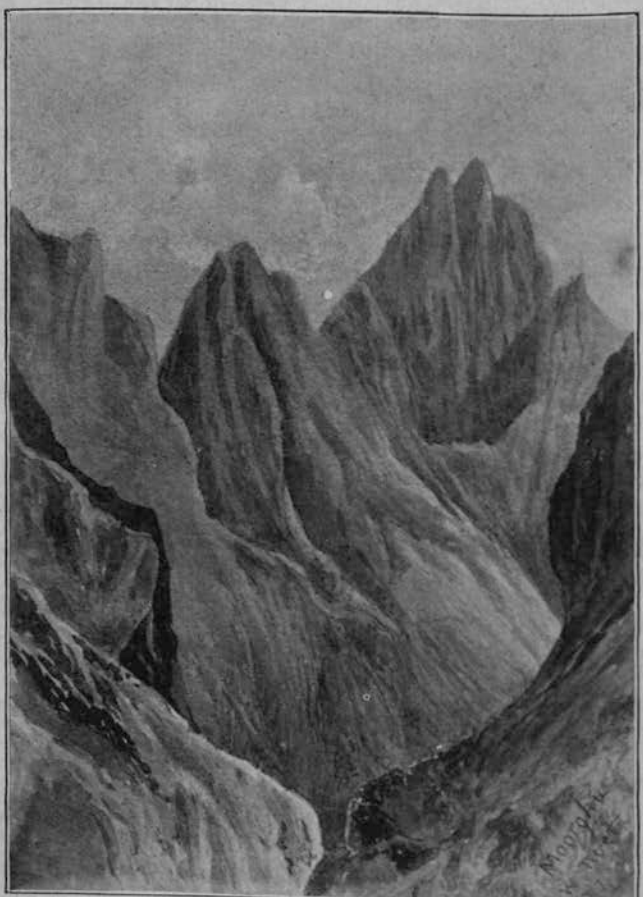
After plunging knee-deep through the snow for some hours, stopping every twenty yards for breath, I sat down to rest and fell asleep in the snow and lay there some time, until roused by Ramzan who was passing with some of the ponies, and when eventually I got over the glacier, I found Roche also lying fast asleep, behind a rock. After descending 3000 feet, we pitched our tents at the bottom of the nullah, and right glad we were to be safe over the Sassihr. We saw some of the wild sheep of Tibet on a hill, across the river, but they were too far off, and we were much too tired to think of anything of that sort, especially as evening was closing in. So, after a small dinner, we turned in early.

MY YAK

CHAPTER XV.

Cross the Shyok River again—Moorghu—Climbing a Precipice—A Landslip—Three Ponies come to grief—A Musk Deer—The Roof of Asia—Tibetan Antelope and Wild Horses—Smashing of Scientific Instruments—Yarkandi Trader and his Combs—Dead Bodies of Horses and Man at foot of the Karakoram Pass.

July 5th.—Crossed the Shyok again. This river takes a great bend, flowing due south where we crossed it to-day, then it takes a turn to the west and afterwards to the north, in which direction it was flowing when we crossed it on the 24th June. There we made the passage of it at an altitude of 11,100 feet; to-day our aneroids, Roche's and mine, gave the altitude at 15,780 and 15,530 feet respectively. The Shyok eventually joins the Indus, of which it is one of the principal tributaries. Having got all the ponies across in safety, we started off in a northerly direction, up a very deep, dark and narrow gorge, with precipitous black cliffs on each side, of a great height. There was no attempt at a path, or even a track, we simply went up the river-bed, which flowed down this gorge, taking the shore when there was one, but going principally in the water,



MOORGHU. [*To face p.* 185, *Vol. I.*

which at that hour of the day was not more than three feet deep. We could not have attempted such a thing in the afternoon, when the snow-water was coming down, as it would have swept away ponies, baggage and men, without a chance of escape, as the rocks came sheer down into the gully, and thus we should have been caught in a nice trap. After riding up this little river for about two miles, we found an opening to the right, of which we took advantage, and mounting the hill for about 300 feet, found ourselves on a large broad plateau surrounded by high snowy peaks. This plain was like all the rest of the country here, stony, but as we saw lots of tracks of Ourial and Burhel and also marks of leopard, there must be grass or some herb to feed on somewhere.

We soon came in sight of a large lake, on which were some duck (ruddy sheldrake), and dismounting we took our guns and tried to circumvent them, but their tactics, though simple, were effective, for they swam out into the middle of the lake and quacked the quack of derision at us.

The midday sun was very hot, and it was a very trying march for all concerned. After crossing this plateau, we came to a spot called Moorghu, where two rivers met, and finding a spring of beautiful water, we pitched our camp there,* especially as it was 5 o'clock P.M., and we had been going ever since 7 A.M., ten weary

* This is where Stoliczka died.

hours. We passed several skeletons of dead horses on the plateau, and also came across some fine horns of the *Ovis Nahura* lying about. When the horses all arrived in camp we had the usual "stables," all those with sore backs, or lame, being brought under the practised eye of Roche, who makes a first-class Vet. Altitude, 15,480 feet.

July 6th.—Left the camp early. Had rather a disturbed night, from two causes, viz. horses and fowls. Taking the latter birds with us has its advantages, no doubt, to vary the monotony of eating mutton thirty days in every month, but it decidedly has its disadvantages, especially when two or three cocks mistake the moon for the sun, and begin crowing lustily at that orb, just when you have got into dream-land. The other disturbance was caused by some of the ponies coming to shelter alongside of the tents, and tumbling over the tent-ropes in the middle of the night.

We rode over the shoulder of a mountain, and then along the course of another river, passing a hill that contained in its colouring nearly every possible tint. In parts it was blood-red—some of the rocks looked as if blood was actually oozing out from them—then came stretches of light blue, pink, and lavender sand, sloping down to more rocks of the brightest yellow. Taking it as a whole, if any painter was faithfully to depict that mountain-side in its true colours, and exhibit

his picture in an art gallery, the public who viewed it would think that the artist had taken leave of his senses.

After riding up this nullah for about an hour, crossing and recrossing the river about forty times, we came to a marvellous chaos of rocks, and consequently had to take to the hill-side, mounting up a precipitous track, the summit of which, by both our aneroids, was 1050 feet above the river, making the top 16,480 feet. No sooner had we reached the top than we descended again into the river-bed, up which we travelled for about two miles. I saw a beautiful lavender-coloured butterfly, with dark-blue stripes on its wings, at the altitude of 16,400 feet. Roche was very disappointed at not being able to secure this rare specimen, for he has already made a very interesting collection of moths, butterflies, etc., taken at high altitudes, and a butterfly caught at such a height above the sea-level, must of necessity be a very valuable entomological specimen.

The heat now became very oppressive, shut in as we were in this narrow gully, with high sandstone cliffs on each side, and the sky was of the deepest shade of blue imaginable. In fact we have noticed that at all these high altitudes the colour of the sky is unnaturally dark, and certainly the sun does not lose his power, for the heat is sometimes unbearable, even to the natives, as our sick returns can testify to.

After we had taken a little food in the middle of the

day, under the shade of a friendly rock, the baggage ponies came up with us, and we were told that as there was a very formidable precipice for the ponies to scale, we had better let our riding-ponies go along with the baggage, and one of the men would show us a short cut, where a man could go, but ponies could not. So we started off, and at last came to a place which more resembled the wall of a house than anything else, and up this horrible precipice we had to climb on our hands and knees. One man having gone up first, took off his turban, and let it down for me to catch hold of, while the man behind me put his head under where I generally sit, by way of keeping me from slipping down. It was a very unpleasant experience, both for me and my companions, as every stone I tried to hold on to gave way and went rattling down on to the heads of those below, who soon found out it was wiser to give me a wide berth, and wait until I had successfully accomplished this fly-like ascent, before they commenced it. Having torn my finger-nails and the knees of my breeches, and nearly pulled the uppermost man, turban and all, down the rocks, and having sat for some time upon the head of the man below me, I found myself at last in a haven of safety, from which I could have a good view of the others swarming up this terrible place, like flies on a wall. Roche and I came to the conclusion that the old saying, about short cuts often proving the longest, most certainly held good in this case, and when

we looked down and saw the place that we had just climbed up, and realised what the result of one false step would have been, we were thankful it was over. The ponies rejoined us, having got over their climb also in safety, and again we rode up the bed of a river, this time almost the dry bed, for it was very broad and there was only a small stream running through the shingle and pebble that formed it.

There being no sort of track, we steered straight ahead until we came for the third time to-day to a dead lock. A portion of the mountain, on the right-hand side of the stream, had fallen in and blocked the whole nullah. We tried in vain to find a way through for the caravan, but it was impossible; great rocks were jammed one on the top of the other, so we had to beat a retreat, and retrace our steps down the nullah again. At last Ramzan found a place which, though bad enough, he thought might do for the ponies to climb. My pony being very sure-footed, went up first, and I wished myself off his back more than once, but eventually we got the whole caravan up, with the exception of three ponies, who fell over and rolled down about fifty feet smashing their loads; but, somehow or other, these ponies seem to have nine lives, like a cat; for some time afterwards they reappeared in the river-bed, on the other side of the landslip, and did not seem any the worse for their tumble. As we were going up the dry bed of this river, a sight met our eyes which astonished those

of us to whom it was a new experience. It was nothing less than a small river coming down to meet us, rushing along its dry bed in little muddy waves. This was the snow-water which had been melting all day up in the mountain-tops, gathering volume from each little tributary as it came down, and it had just arrived in the main channel. In a very short time this broad dry channel we had been riding up all day became a series of little angry foaming torrents, and very dirty ones too.

After ten hours' walking and riding, we came at last to a sandy sort of terrace above the river, and thought we had had enough for one day, and I expect the baggage ponies thought so too, consequently we pitched our tents, lit our fires, tied up our horses, head to croup,* and took that rest which we felt we had all well earned. Altitude, 16,630 feet.

July 7th.—Last night was one of the coldest we have yet experienced. The water in the brass basins froze in our tents, and when we came to ride up the bed of the river again we found running water frozen. We had made an early start, and as Roche and I were riding-

* This method of tying-up ponies is one of the simplest possible, and yet neither Roche nor I had ever seen it before. The head of one is tied to the crupper of the other's pack-saddle and *vice versâ*. The consequence is neither can move without the other, and then only in a circle. Therefore no picket-ropes or hobbles are necessary.

ahead of our caravan, we all of a sudden came upon an animal standing right in the middle of the nullah. We got our telescopes on to him and found he was a Custora, or musk-deer, but what he was doing all by himself in this barren country, where there is not a blade of grass to be seen, puzzled us all not a little.

Roche, having his rifle handy, proceeded to stalk him and eventually got two shots at him, but both were unsuccessful. As we rode up the nullah we saw the Pathan and his monkeys ahead of us, the monkeys all walking. When he came to wading across the river, he left the monkeys on the opposite shore, as he said it was good for them to have a bath; and it was most ludicrous to see them look at the water and think about it, and consult each other, until at last one took the lead and proceeded to try and jump it in one bound, the result being that he alighted in the middle and had to swim out. It was very amusing watching them, all their movements and gestures were so painfully human. The scenery underwent a complete revolution as we got further up this nullah. The hills grew smaller, the nullah wider, and at last there was not a particle of snow to be seen, and yet we were rising gradually, and when we got into the valley that leads up towards the great plateau or table-land marked in the map, "Depsang Plains," we might have been anywhere, except in the midst of the Himalayas, for not a mountain top was visible, nothing but low sand-hills, but unbeknown

to ourselves we were at an altitude of over 18,000 feet above the sea-level, and gradually approaching what might well be termed the "Roof of Asia." The pass leading from this valley, which we named Ruspah Loongpa, or the valley of bones (owing to the mass of skeletons and bones of dead horses lying about in all directions), is not named on any of the Maps which we have with us, therefore, as we saw a butterfly on the top of the pass, which my aneroid marked, 18,250 feet, we also named the pass "Pey-ma-laptse-la," or the Butterfly pass.

This pass differs from other passes in the Himalayas, inasmuch as it is simply a break between two low sandy hills, without a particle of snow anywhere near it, and the approach to it, instead of being a very steep rocky ascent, is a very gradual slope, starting from the nullah at an elevation of 16,630 feet, and rising almost imperceptibly to an altitude which places it high on the list of Himalayan passes, being higher than the Kardong, and within a few feet of the summit of the Sassihr glacier and pass. Again, another difference between this pass and others lies in there being no descent. After going over this pass, you find yourself on this huge extent of table-land,* stretching away for miles north, east and west, in low undulating slopes of sand, just like

* In the Report of Sir Douglas Forsyth's Mission to Yarkand (1873), the writer, in describing the Depsang plateau, says: "Over the Dowlat-beg plateau across a shallow stream and rise up to the

THE ROOF OF ASIA.

[To face p. 193, Vol. I.

any ordinary desert; but the most peculiar part of this extraordinary high plateau, and that which made us give it the name of the Roof of Asia, is that looking north, east, and west, nothing is visible but small peaks and tops, all those to the north and east covered with a certain amount of snow, and those to the west being entirely snow-clad. These western peaks, being just visible over the long low ridges of yellow sand, reminded one more of small islands on the horizon of the ocean. Standing on this Depsang plateau, nearly 3000 feet higher than the top of Mont Blanc, and looking westward upon such giants as the Mountain known as K2., 28,278 feet, the second highest mountain in the world, and several others, varying from 22,000 to 26,000 feet, whose tops only were visible, it did not require a very great effect of imagination to suppose oneself on the Roof of Asia. As the sun was very powerful, the mirage in this desert plateau was very strong, but a lake which we fancied we saw to the east was not a sport of the mirage, but a reality, for we rode up to see if there were any curious water-fowl upon it, but we could not approach it on horseback, as it was surrounded by treacherous bogs and quicksands. On a sandy ridge, east of the lake, we saw some animals moving, which proved to be kyangs

Depsang plain, a wide undulating plateau from which the world around subsides, the highest hill tops only peering above the horizon. Soil soft and spongy, gravel and clay mixed, and where water-logged, boggy. No vegetation—breathing distressed."

(half-wild horse and half-wild ass). Roche rode after them, but they were off long before he could approach them. It was very unfortunate for us that our caravan was ahead of us, because, after coming off this table-land, they came upon a herd of Tibetan Antelope feeding in the bottom of a nullah, where we could have stalked them. We saw them galloping away from our caravan, in fact they were coming straight in our direction, but the instant they perceived us they headed due east and were out of sight before we could get our telescopes out to inspect them.

We were now getting weary from our long ride of ten hours without food, and, having caught up the caravan, told Ramzan we would call a halt at the first water, for which order he was very thankful, as not only were the ponies getting done, but four of the men were very bad, having been seized with violent vomiting on the Roof of Asia, and Rassoul II. with the tiffin-basket, which is now carried by the "General," had not been seen since 10 A.M., to our great disadvantage, as we had in consequence had nothing to eat since breakfast, and it was then sunset. The coolies also, with the tent-poles, had evidently given in, as there were no signs of them either. So we halted under the bank of the Chip Chak river, which was rising fast, but we managed to get just clear of its highest water-mark and there we awaited our tent-poles, sitting on the ground, shivering with the cold, our poshtins being on the "General," who, with

the tiffin-basket, was lost. However, after the exercise of a certain amount of patience, occasionally mixed with doubtful compliments towards the coolies and the missing Rassoul, everything turned up, and we managed to get a bite of food at 9.30 P.M., and not before we both needed it.

The place where we halted was well known to Ramzan and some of the pony-men, who had already been to Yarkand, and they informed us that it was called after a certain Yarkandi trader whose name was Dowlatt Beg, and as this gentleman had the bad taste to choose this spot wherein to die, the traders added the word "Uldi" to his name, *uldi* signifying "died here," so this place is known as "Dowlatt Beg-uldi." It is about a dozen miles from the Karakoram pass, and is the highest altitude we have camped in as yet, being 17,380 feet. Here it was that I made a discovery that, figuratively speaking, "knocked me all of a heap." Owing to yesterday's hard march, I had not opened my case containing my scientific instruments, etc., never dreaming but that they were all right. Imagine my consternation, on opening the case to-night, to see whether the reading of my best aneroid agreed with that of Roche, to find most of the contents of the case broken to pieces! I had purposely refrained from carrying my aneroid, compass, etc., in my saddle-bags or pistol holster, because very often when one dismounts and leaves one's pony alone—which frequently has to be

done—the animal indulges in a roll, which of course would break everything in the holsters and saddle-bags; so I had entrusted the case to one man and one safe pony, so that I could always have recourse to this case at any time I liked during the march.

In the hurry of loading up the ponies yesterday, my case had been accidentally put upon one of the three ponies who fell down the little precipice, and although the animal escaped with a few bruises, my case did not. I am now minus my best aneroid, three watches, two thermometers, one compass, and one magnifying glass, all smashed. However, we still have left two compasses, two thermometers, three watches and two aneroids.

July 8th.—Four sick men came to be doctored this morning early, and after dosing them with quinine, Roche disappeared. Whilst I was sitting in my tent trying to darn a stocking-heel, in came Roche, evidently in a most perturbed frame of mind. On inquiring as to what was the matter, imagine my amazement, when he informed me that he had just seen a beautiful painted lady near the river, that he had been following her for a long way, but to his great regret had failed to come up with her.

He then appealed to me as to whether I had ever heard of such a thing as a painted lady at an elevation of 17,380 feet above the level of the sea, but as I was

not aware that there existed any such a thing as an altitudinal limit to the peregrinations of these fascinating females, I held my peace and awaited the elucidation of the mystery, which was cleared up by his saying he had gone out in search of entomological specimens with his butterfly net, and this "painted lady" was the name by which a certain gaudy butterfly was known to those conversant with that interesting science.

* * * * *

As the men and ponies were all stiff and shin-sore, after their twenty-six-mile march yesterday, we determined not to cross the Karakoram pass to-day, but to camp at the foot of it and cross to-morrow. A deadly route indeed it was that we followed this morning, up the nearly dry bed of the Karakoram river. At one spot alone there lay the remains of forty-one horses, and one human being, whose skull grinned at us from amongst these bones and skeletons, all of which had perished on the Karakoram pass and been washed down by the snow floods. Leaving these ghastly remains, we continued up the river-bed, and as we had now evidently entered a game country, Roche and I rode ahead of the caravan, followed by our shikaris carrying our rifles, and proceeded to make all the ground good with our telescopes before venturing on it. Although we saw tracks of animals, especially of leopard and antelope, we came upon nothing to shoot at except some pigeons, which we slaughtered for the pot.

It was in picking up one of those dead birds, that I saw growing under a rock a very pretty little mauve flower with purple petals, a yellow centre, and a small green leaf; close to these flowers were masses of light green velvety mosses. We took the altitude in which these flowers were growing, and it was 17,680 feet.

After riding for eight miles up the bed of the river, which was literally strewn with bones and skeletons of horses, we came to a spot not far from the pass, and pitched our tents at an altitude of 18,000 feet.

There is a legend relating to this place where we are camping to-night, and it runs thus: A certain Yarkandi trader was on his way home from India with a caravan laden with *combs*, and he was of course carrying fuel on some of his ponies. On reaching this spot he halted, thinking he would have a cup of tea before facing the dangers of the Karakoram pass. So he lit a fire with his wood, and put his kettle on to boil, but owing to the extremely high altitude, the water would not get hot enough to please him, and to make his tea properly. So he went on piling on the wood to make the fire hotter, until it was all finished. Being a man of an obstinate disposition, and determined to have his cup of tea, he searched about for more fuel to feed his fire, but finding none, he had recourse to his combs, in which venture all his money was sunk. Comb after comb disappeared in the fire, but the water would not boil; at length he put on the last remaining comb, the tea

was made and drunk, but the ruined trader had nothing left but the empty cup of tea, and the additional empty privilege of recording his folly and obstinacy by the place being named "Charjoshjilga," which in the language of the country means the "Nullah of boiling tea."

A LADEN YAK.

CHAPTER XVI.

Karakoram Pass—Mustagh, or Ice Mountains—The Ravens—Dalgleish's Cairn—Death of one of our Ponies—Tibetan Antelope—Karakoram Brangsa—A Storm and a Whirlwind at Wahab Jilja—Aktagh—Roche kills an Antelope Buck—Heat of the Plain—Crossing Sugeyt Pass.

July 9th.—This day saw our passage of the Mustagh, or Ice Mountains, by the Karakoram pass. After what we had read of its dangers and difficulties, and after what had been told us by no less a person than that distinguished Russian traveller, Prince Galitzin himself, we were prepared for the worst, but as events turned out, we were doomed to be most agreeably disappointed. In giving my description of the Karakoram pass, I wish to be acquitted of any intention of challenging the accounts of the dangers, discomforts, and insurmountable difficulties which it appears other travellers have encountered in crossing this famous pass. The few living Europeans who have ever been across it can be almost counted on one's fingers, and of those, but few have committed their impressions and experiences to paper for the purpose of publication. I think I have read most if not all the

published accounts, of which there are I believe but three. There can be no doubt that these dangers and difficulties depend a great deal on the weather, and even more on the time of year when the crossing of the pass is effected.

Prince Galitzin's account of his own experiences on the pass, as related to me by himself, would be enough to deter any one from ever making an attempt to cross it, the least of his troubles being the death of twenty-six of his ponies.

That the pass, under certain conditions, is a deadly one to baggage-animals, is attested by the presence of the hundreds of bones and skeletons with which the pass and its environs are bestrewn.

One writer has described the sufferings of both men and horses, from the extreme rarefaction of the air at such an abnormal altitude, and another has accounted for these vomitings, headaches and difficulty of breathing, by attributing them to the smell of the wild onions, which, according to the writer, grow in profusion all about the pass, but of which we saw no sign. It is not for me to question any of these statements, I can only record the experiences that Major Roche and I went through, and describe faithfully what those experiences were.

We were most certainly favoured by the weather, for it was a bright and beautiful morning when we left our camping-ground at 7.45 A.M. on this 9th day

of July, 1892. After riding for about an hour and a quarter up a broad nullah, with a gentle upward slope, by the side of the Karakoram river, we came to a place where the track turns off eastwards, almost at right angles to the line we had been previously following, and here the ascent of the pass commenced. It was easy and short, the track good, and not a particle of snow. The ascent from the bed of the river in the valley, to the summit of the pass, was only 950 feet, carefully taken by aneroid. We were alone, Major Roche and I, and we rode our ponies up to the summit of the pass, the hardy little animals pausing only twice to take breath. As for Roche and myself, we felt absolutely no discomfort whatever, either in the head or in respiration.*

The summit is marked by a cairn or small Mani, on which some of the caravan men (Buddhists) are in the habit of placing flags and sticks with yaks' tails attached to them. They also invariably bring food for

* I think this may be accounted for by the fact that we were almost acclimatised to these high altitudes, by this time. Since leaving Panamik, we have been living at a mean elevation of 17,305 ft. during the last eight days; our highest daily altitudes being as follows:—July 2nd, 15,000; 3rd, 17,180; 4th, 18,380; 5th, 15,980; 6th, 16,620; 7th, 18,330; 8th, 18,000; 9th, 18,980 ft. Our camps have also been at abnormally high altitudes, and at first we could not sleep. Latterly, we slept well—July 2nd, 14,930; 3rd, 17,180; 4th, 16,380; 5th, 15,480; 6th, 16,630; 7th, 17,380; 8th, 18,000; 9th, 17,780 ft. The mean altitude of our camp, during the past eight days, being close on 17,000 ft.

a pair of old ravens, who live in or about this cairn. On reaching this spot we dismounted, and, leaving our ponies to their own devices, proceeded to take the altitude by two different aneroids, which marked 18,980 and 19,300 feet respectively. As we were some way ahead of our caravan, we had some time to wait until they joined us, which was spent by Roche in the search for entomological specimens, and by me in placing on the cairn an old rag, tied on to a stick, with our names and date inscribed with a very dark drawing pencil. Roche, meanwhile, met with an extraordinary piece of good luck, for on the very summit of the pass, close to where I was standing, the only living thing to be seen, except the ravens, was a butterfly, which he promptly caught in his net. By this time some of the ponies had arrived, notably those belonging to the cook's department. We proceeded to order breakfast, and while the cook was making his fire and preparing our repast, Roche went up the hill above the pass, on the north side, and took three photographs, while I climbed the opposite hill; both of us wishing to find out what it felt like at 20,000 feet above the sea-level. When breakfast was all ready, we came down again on to the pass and having rigged up an impromptu awning, sat down and discussed a very hearty meal. This was at 11.30 A.M., and the thermometer that we placed out in the sun's rays, while we were at breakfast, marked 102° at noon. After we had finished

eating, we lay down to enjoy a pipe, and I fell asleep. After spending two hours and forty minutes on the top of this much-dreaded pass, we remounted our horses and rode down the easy slope that forms the north-east side of the pass, until we came to the cairn which marks the spot where Dalgleish was murdered. This little monument, that was erected by Captain Bower, 17 Bengal Cavalry, is composed of rough stones, which form a square pedestal, on which is placed a piece of white marble, shaped like an ordinary upright tombstone, engraved in English and Arabic characters, with the following words:—

HERE FELL
A. DALGLEISH,
MURDERED BY
AN AFGHAN.

Then the same in Arabic.

As a brother Scotsman, I took two stones from the cairn and placed them in my saddle-bag, intending to forward them to the relatives of the murdered man in Edinburgh at the first opportunity that offers.

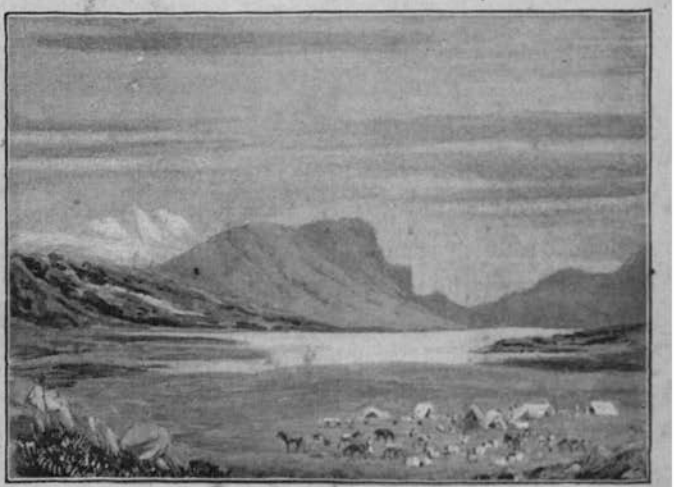
After leaving poor Dalgleish's cairn, our route lay northwards, along the bed of the Yarkand river, which has its source in the Karakoram, and which flows through a broad valley, with low hills on either side, of a sandy and gravelly nature, but containing the most marvellous effects of colouring I ever saw. Some of these hills were quite blood red when the sun was

shining on them, and others were of a mixture of violet, pink, olive green and lavender. There was not a particle of snow to be seen, except on some of the far away hills. About six miles down the river, we came across two of our men standing over the dead body of one of our ponies. Cause of death unknown; we think it must have been heart disease, as the pony was quite well and carried his load over the pass all right. We removed his shoes and left him a welcome prey to the leopard and wild dog.

The valley soon began to narrow, and the river, which was gaining somewhat in volume from the various tributaries which fed it, rushed through a narrow gorge for about a mile, when it debouched on to a large stony plain, where it lost its individuality by being broken up into a lot of small streams, which trickled along sandy and pebbly beds, many sizes too big for them. It was here we saw our first Tibetan antelope, close to us. A doe with her fawn. They were wonderfully tame, having scarcely ever seen a human being, they did not seem to mind us in the least, and later on we saw five more bucks on the side of the hill, overlooking our camp, which we reached at 6 P.M., glad to see grass again, as our ponies were getting out of sorts from want of green food. Had we been fortunate enough to find the *Karakoram onions* that we read about, we might have given some to the ponies, but we literally never set eyes upon anything green, from the

summit of the Karakoram pass to this spot, a six hours' ride.

The temperature here is much milder than it is on the south side of the pass, in fact we dined to-night for the first time without wearing our furs. Every other night it has been so bitterly cold that we could not have dined without them. Altitude, 17,780 feet.



KARAKORAM: BRANGSA SNOW LAKE.

July 10th.—Our ponies were ever so much fresher looking after their night on the grass, poor as it was, and also for the salt we gave to each mixed with their barley. We started about 8 A.M. and rode across a vast plateau, covered with Tibetan antelope, but we could not get anywhere near them, owing to the flatness of the plain. At last, when we were only separated

by about fifty yards from our shikaris, who had our rifles, a beautiful antelope buck sprang up from behind a rock, about 150 yards off, and stood looking at us; of course we dared not move to get our rifles, and our shikaris also dared not move to give them to us, so there we sat in our saddles, staring at this beautiful and graceful animal, making mental calculations as to the length of his horns. In a few seconds he turned and trotted off into the hills and I, dismounting, followed him. He led me a nice chase for three mortal hours, until he put a big nullah between us, which was too steep for me to cross, and I was already a long way from the caravan, so, putting up the 200 yards sight and holding well over his back, I fired and I saw the bullet strike between his legs. The nullah must have been 300 yards and more across. It is very difficult to judge distance in this rarefied atmosphere. After this we saw at different times of the day sixteen more bucks, but, as they were on the plains, there was little or no chance of getting a shot within 300 yards. We had various unsuccessful stalks, I did not get another shot, but Roche got four shots, all however at 300 or 400 yards, just on the chance of hitting one, as we are getting so tired of mutton. About four o'clock our good weather deserted us, and while we were crossing a desolate waste, a terrific storm of wind and hail came suddenly upon us, which our horses would not face. Roche got caught in a whirlwind, which sent him and

his horse spinning round, dashing up sand and loose stones into his face and taking his solar topee off and depositing it about 300 yards off. The hail changed to rain, and we all got wet through and bitterly cold, and when we got to our camping-ground, it would be difficult to imagine a more draggled-looking appearance than we presented. Luckily the rain stopped and we got our tents pitched dry. Altitude, 16,980 feet.

July 11th.—Snowing slightly all night. Roche started off at 6 A.M. with his shikari to stalk. I remained in camp and saw to the tents being thoroughly dry before they were struck, as the sun came out about 8 A.M. and shone as it only can shine in this country, drying the tents in no time. Nothing worthy of record happened to-day. Our route lay across a vast plain without a drop of water, as the Yarkand river disappears underground close to where we camped, and flows under this plain for about nine miles; it then reappears under the guise of about twenty very powerful springs of beautiful clear water, all rising within an area of an acre. The heat was intense to-day, and riding over that plain was very trying, especially as there was a hot wind blowing. About 6 P.M. I reached the camp. I had been after an antelope for an hour and a half and missed it. The animal was not more than 150 yards off, but the mirage was so dazzling I could not take a proper sight. I found Roche had killed a very fine buck with

a good head. During the march a pair of aquatic birds of some sort flew close over my head, my gun of course being in the gun cover, so that I could not get it in time. The birds made a noise like wild geese and were as big as a Brent goose. Their plumage, as far as I could see, was bright red and grey.

Our camp to-night is at the junction of the two branches of the Yarkand river, and the name of the place is Aktagh, or white peak. The whole configuration of the country has undergone a complete change since we crossed the Karakoram pass. Instead of being shut into nullahs and gorges and deep gullies, and walled in by the precipitous rocks of giant snow-clad mountains, we are now in an open country of vast plains and distant hills and the temperature has altered with the scenery.

Our sick men are recovering, and having ponies to spare for them to ride, accelerates their convalescence, as those long marches on foot under a hot sun are not conducive to recovery from an attack of fever. We had one fresh case of fever to-night. Our treatment is simple but sound. Two Cockle's pills directly the case is reported, and a good strong dose of quinine and a cup of hot tea in the morning. This evening it is pouring with rain and there is a thunderstorm going on somewhere in the neighbourhood. Altitude, 16,730 feet.

July 12th.—I started early with my shikari in the hopes of seeing some antelope, and as we intended

going into the hills I took with me Tashisonnum, who had been over this country before, otherwise we could never have found our way. Ahmed Din also volunteered to come, which suited me very well, as I could go on with my lessons in Persian with him as we went along. We spied all round from every commanding eminence, but beyond one doe antelope and her fawn, we saw no game the whole day. On leaving the camp I saw the two Karakoram ravens, and now believe the story the caravan men told us respecting them.

It appears they live on the top of the Karakoram pass, where first we saw them, they attach themselves to a caravan going north towards Chinese territory, and they accompany the same only as far as Sugeyt, after which they invariably return. The caravan men are very superstitious about them and put out food for them every night. When I left the camp this morning, both ravens accompanied me for a short distance, but seeing that there were but four ponies out of fifty-five, they came to the conclusion that it was not a *bonâ fide* start of the caravan, so one of them flew back to camp, and the other accompanied us all the time.

After going up a long valley, with sandy sloping hills on each side, we came to a lake of the most wonderfully clear water; on it were some curious looking ducks which, like most animals and birds in this part of the country, do not seem to mind the presence of a human being. I could not shoot them, having only a rifle with me, but

Rahim Sheik, my shikari, volunteered to catch one in his hand. Wishing to see whether it was bounce on his part, or if he really could, I told him to go on and try, so without taking his clothes off he quietly walked into the water up to his middle and gradually edged up towards the ducks. As soon as he was within ten yards of them they all dived, and he, suddenly making a rush for the place where he judged they would come up again, almost disappeared under water himself, and in a few seconds he had caught one. He wanted to go on catching the rest, but I ordered him to come out, and he mounted his pony dripping wet, and we continued our march. By this time the sun was high up in the heavens and it was baking hot, and as we emerged from the valley on to a large stony plain, I foresaw we were in for a sweltering ride. On our right hand was the most level piece of table-land I had ever seen. Its summit was literally as level as a billiard-table, for about three miles. After riding for two hours in the heat of the day along this fiery strand, I began to think it was time for a little food, and I searched right and left for a stone even, that I could put my head behind for a little shade, but there was not a square inch of such a luxury to be had. I tried to get a bit by sitting near my horse, but nothing short of crawling underneath his belly would have given me the desired comfort at that time of day. Oh, for a tree from the Sindh Valley of Kashmir, or a friendly rock

from the precipitous regions of Ladak, in the shade of which to put my aching head and burning limbs! But there was nothing, so I elected to do without food; and rode on and on along that accursed plain, which seemed to have no end to it, until at last my horse Panamik began to neigh, which showed the presence of water, for by this time both men and horses were beginning to feel the effects of the burning sun and want of water.

We quenched our thirst and ate some lunch as we rode along and soon began rapidly to ascend, leaving the plain behind us, and then occurred one of those rapid changes of temperature which so often occur in this country, for in less than three hours from the time when we were sweltering on that burning strand, we were crossing the Sugeyt pass in a thick snow-storm, at an altitude of 18,680 feet. It caused fever amongst a lot of our men, but Roche and I escaped any ill effects from it.

The approach to this pass was very fine, the hills on each side of the valley leading up to it being very bold in outline, and standing up like great walls 1500 feet high. There was not much snow until we reached the actual summit of the pass, and then there was plenty both above and below, for it came on fast and thick, so that I began to fear the caravan would be unable to cross it that evening. We waited a bit to see if the storm would clear off before attempting to descend the other side, as the man we had with us

told us it was frightfully steep and a great part of it ice. In due course of time the snow-storm passed over, and the sun coming out for a few minutes gave us a grand panoramic view of the old disputed territory between Western Tibet and Chinese Turkestan, which lay at our feet. But it soon clouded over again, not however before I was enabled to make a rough sketch.

Going down the pass on the frozen snow, and having not only to lead my pony, but also to choose footholds for him as well as for myself, was an awkward job, and continued for 1200 feet. One of the ponies slipped up and went sliding down the frozen snow exactly as if he was tobogganing; it was amusing enough to look at, but just a question how far he would go before he was brought to a standstill, and how many legs he would break on the way. However, a friendly snow-hummock stopped him and there were no bones broken. About the middle of the descent we came across a pretty little bird in the snow so wonderfully tame that I nearly caught him in my hand; I fed him with some crumbs I had in the lining of my pocket and he followed us right down to the foot of the pass chirruping away as lively as possible.

At 6 P.M. we four, viz. Ahmed Din, the shikari, the pony-man and myself found ourselves in Chinese Territory, and, seeing that there was grass and water under the pass, I ordered a halt. So we "off saddles," and turning our ponies on to the grass sat down and

brought our telescopes to bear on to the summit of the pass above us. The first to cross was Roche with his two shikaris, and they did not join us until close upon 8 o'clock, and when they did arrive, it was with the startling news that the caravan was two hours behind them. We thought of course it would be madness for Ramzan to attempt to take his caravan over the pass in the dark, as half the ponies would probably break their necks coming down over that frozen snow, so we made up our minds that we should have to sleep out that night, and the only thing that we minded was getting no food, especially as Roche was starving, having had nothing since breakfast. We thought of firing our guns, in the hope that Ramzan would hear them and know that we, anyhow, were safe, and although he could not bring his caravan down, he might send us some food, but we abandoned the idea as useless. Just before dark we spied two men and three ponies on the summit of the pass, and when they got down they told us Ramzan was pushing on with his caravan determined to cross the pass to-night. Meanwhile I wrapped myself up in my plaid, and with my saddle for a pillow indulged in a nap which was rudely broken by a shout which awoke all the echoes in the nullah. By this time it was dark and impossible to know what was going on. Luckily the two men who had already arrived were Rassoul, the cook, and Subhana with the three ponies belonging to the kitchen department, so that there was

no chance of our starving, and as one of the ponies was laden with wood, we soon had a fire brightly burning, which Ramzan could easily see from the top of the pass, and this—as it turned out afterwards—determined him to push on, especially as he knew of a zigzag track which enabled him to avoid the snow and the little piece of glacier that we came down, old Tashi-sonnum having missed the track in the snow-storm and taken us the wrong way.

The shout that had so rudely broken my slumbers was from one of the leading pony-men half way down the nullah on seeing the camp fire, and its echoes resounded through the rocks and was taken up by the other men on the pass, and that was our first indication that the caravan was approaching. By 10 P.M. the whole party, save a few stragglers on foot, were with us in the nullah, and it was a brilliant performance almost unequalled in the annals of caravan travel for a man to bring his caravan of fifty loaded ponies over a pass of 18,680 feet, in a snow-storm, at 10 o'clock at night without losing one, or any injury being done. In a short time the tents were pitched, the dinner cooked as only a Ladaki cook could manage under trying circumstances, and Roche and I did ample justice to an antelope steak washed down with several cups of good hot tea.

On calling the roll (figuratively speaking) we found three men missing, two coolies with Roche's photo-

graphic apparatus, and the Pathan with his monkeys. The first two came into camp just before midnight, the latter did not appear at all.

After giving the pony-men a couple of sheep as a reward for their unflagging energy in getting the caravan safely over the pass under such exceptional circumstances, we turned in and slept the sleep of the weary if not of the just. Altitude, 17,380 feet.

CHAPTER XVII.

We cross the Chinese Frontier—March up to Chinese Fort—Camp inside Fort—Reception by Ching Dolai, Chinese Commandant—History of the Fort—Sugeyt and Shahidula—No provisions procurable—Kilian Pass impracticable—The Sanju route—Prince Galitzin in difficulties.

July 13th.—The Pathan and his monkeys turned up this morning after a night spent on the top of the pass, and they seemed none the worse. The Bunder-wallah (monkey man) informed us that last time he went to Yarkand he lost three out of four of his monkeys under similar circumstances. As the poor fellow had nothing but rags tied on to his feet, we gave him a pair of chuplies, for which he was most grateful. After breakfast Roche and I started off to walk down the nullah, followed by our shikaris carrying the rifles. Our route lay as usual down the nearly dry bed of the Sugeyt river which has its source in the pass of that name.

On leaving camp we saw the two Karakoram ravens sitting solemnly on the rocks watching the busy life of the camp as the men were striking the tents and the pony-boys loading up the baggage animals.

We walked for about four miles without seeing any game through an uninteresting but mountainous country, occasionally coming upon patches of coarse grass, round which, on the soft mud, could be seen many footprints of wild animals, which proved that they did exist in this district, although we never set eyes upon them. There were some very fresh footmarks, especially those of a Kyang (wild horse) and foal, and several of leopard, and one which we took to be that of a wild yak. Of antelope we saw no tracks at all, so I am afraid we have left the antelope district behind us, and regret now we did not stop a couple of days at Wahab Jilga, where they were in plenty. Sitting down we waited for our ponies and then rode on till we came to a gorge through which the Sugeyt flowed, when we had to leave the river and go over the hill. The cliffs on the left hand side of this defile were stupendous and pyramidal in shape, rising up a great height from the little river which looked like a silver thread at their feet.

About midday the wind rose and by 2 P.M. it blew a gale. At 3 o'clock we had to cross the same river, which was now unrecognisable. At starting this morning it was equal to a small Highland burn, over which it was as easy to step as to walk through, but at 3 P.M. it was a very different story. The snow-water was coming down the side nullahs in a hundred miniature torrents, and when these were all concen-

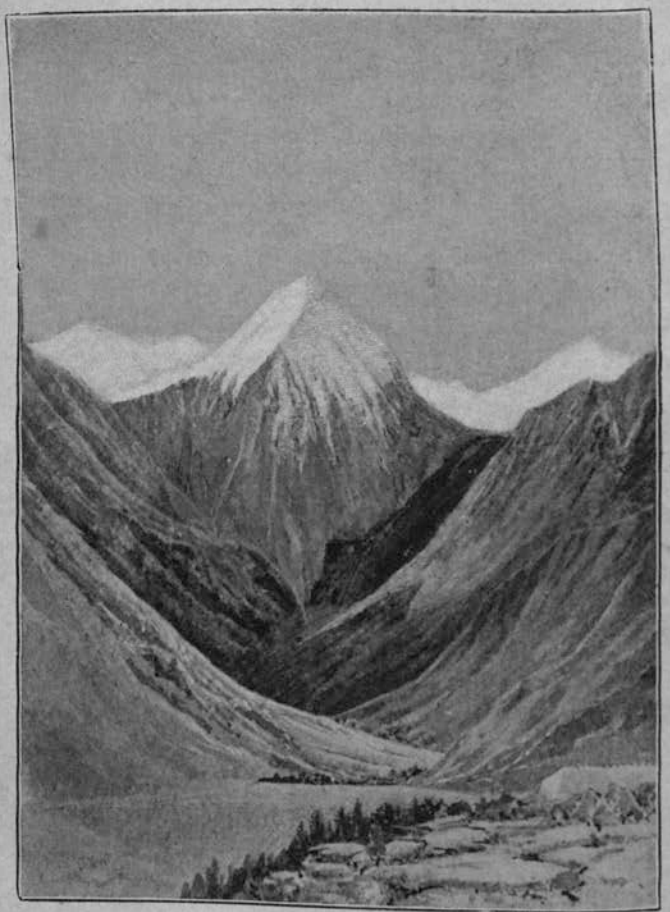
trated into one channel they became a very formidable foe, with whom we had to do battle frequently this afternoon, as we crossed the river seven times, and each time as the day advanced there was more water in it, making each crossing more difficult than the previous one. But our uniform good luck * stuck to us, and we made every crossing without accident, although twice I saw the water wash over two of the ponies' backs, and Roche very nearly came to grief once, but escaped with a slight wetting. At last the valley opened up almost into a plain, so broad did it become, and soon we came upon twenty or thirty yaks feeding on some rough grass which, with a few stunted willows, fringed the edge of the river. This proved to us that we were approaching human habitations of some sort. But imagine our surprise on reaching the edge of this elevated plateau, and on looking down upon the plain of the Karakash river, to see nothing in the shape of a habitation, not even the tents of that nomad race, the Kirghiz, who inhabit this country. Naught was to be seen but the walls of the Chinese fort, which stands alone in the centre of

* These Tibetans are a superstitious folk and believe a great deal in a person having a "lucky star." Most of our men had crossed the Karakoram before, and always had had a bad time. Our having such magnificent weather, and treating this much dreaded pass as a picnic ground, had a great effect upon our followers who confided to Ahmed Din that they would go anywhere with us after that, because no harm could come to us as we were under special supervision from above.

the plain, about half a mile from the Karakash river. This plain is surrounded by mountains ranging from 20,000 to 23,000 feet high. In fact the view from the plateau where we stopped to let our caravan come up with us so as to march up to the fort in some sort of order, was, I think, as fine if not finer than anything I had seen in Kashmir. After nine days of sand and rock, varied occasionally by snow and ice, anything green was a God-send to the eye, and there at our feet lay meadows of green grass, through which we could see the windings of the Karakash river, gleaming like silver in the sunlight. By means of our field-glasses we could see that our approach had been reported in the fort, as we could see figures on the ramparts running about.

We rode up to it in the following martial order, first came Roche and myself, then eight horsemen, each with one of our guns or rifles, then the caravan. A most imposing array, as we were told afterwards. On our way to this fort we came across a board wedged in between two large stones, on which was printed in large Chinese characters and also in Hindustani, "Any one crossing the Chinese Frontier without reporting himself at this fort will be imprisoned."

When we arrived under the walls of the fort, we rode round to find an entrance, going round three sides of it before we at length came upon the gateway outside of



[*To face p.* 221, *Vol. I.*

SUGEYT FORT, CHINESE TARTARY.

which were standing a man and a camel. The former motioned us to dismount and enter, and so we found ourselves for the first time inside a Chinese fortress. No sooner had we dismounted than all sorts of queer-looking individuals, Chinese, Kirghiz, Yarkandis, Tartars, etc., presented themselves, appearing as if by magic from various parts of the interior, but their looks were as peaceful as our demeanour was warlike. At last the head Chinese official in charge of the fort and the Frontier appeared in a gorgeous blue silk robe and all other accessories, including a magnificent pigtail, which nearly touched the ground. We were shown into a room and invited to sit on a divan, while two chairs were placed to the right and left, on one of which sat the Chinese official and on the other Ahmed Din. The former had his interpreter alongside of him, and the usual salutations were passed between us, we conveying our compliments in English to Ahmed Din, who rendered them into Persian for the Chinese interpreter, who re-translated them from Persian into Chinese for the benefit of his master.

Then came the inevitable cup of tea handed to us by a young giant in fur cap and Kirghiz coat (like a long fur-lined dressing-gown with a girdle), and enormous boots, after which many questions followed, commencing with "Where are you going to?" and ending with "How old are you?" As our present intention is to steal quietly off to the Pamirs from Shahidula, six

miles north of this place, without the knowledge of the Chinese officials in this fort, we naturally were not very communicative on the subject of our route, contenting ourselves by saying that Yarkand was our ultimate destination. We were then invited to pitch our tents inside the fort, an offer which we were very glad to accept, as it was still blowing a gale of wind, and our tents would have been blown to ribbons, had we attempted to camp outside on the plain, for it was all we could do to secure them even in an angle of the high walls of the fort. So we spent a wretched night expecting every moment that they would be blown down. We were literally smothered in dust and sand, and to make matters worse there was no decent drinking water to be had at the fort; all we could get was thick with mud and we had to use this for our tea and also to wash with, which latter ceremony was a waste of time, soap, and energy, as I think the water made us rather dirtier than we were before. And thus with ridge poles creaking, tent-ropes straining, dust and sand flying about and getting into bed with us, we retired not to rest but to lie down and wonder how long the tents would stand. Thus we passed our first night in Chinese Territory.

July 14th.—When we got up this morning our tents were deep in sand and dirt which seemed to penetrate everything and everywhere. I spent the morning

cleaning my rifles, for the sand had got even into the gun-cases and had made a dreadful mess of everything. We had hoped to have made to-day a washing day, as our clean things are running rather short, but all our laundry projects were knocked on the head owing to the sand-storm.

About midday the Chinese Commandant sent a man with his cards to our tents. They were curious looking things, and his name printed in Chinese characters on about half a square yard of red tissue paper, resembled three squashed spiders, which on inquiring I found to be "Ching Dolai." Ching is his name, and Dolai his rank or title. It is a very low grade, but still he is in command of the fort, and in charge of this portion of the frontier.

Ching Dolai built this fort, of which he is very proud, but I cannot congratulate him either on his knowledge of the science of fortification or on his choice of locality, for he has placed his fort down in a hollow, when he might have chosen a much more suitable spot within half a mile, a commanding position half fortified by Nature already.

The political history of this fort is instructive and worth relating, as it gives an insight into Central Asian intrigue as it obtains in this corner of Chinese Turkestan.

For many years a powerful tribe called the Kunjutis had been in the habit of raiding the caravans from

Ladak and Yarkand and also the Kirghiz in Shahidula and the immediate neighbourhood. Shahidula is six miles north of Sugeyt and was undoubtedly at the time of Sir Douglas Forsyth's mission to Yarkand (in 1873), the recognised political frontier between Ladak and Chinese Turkestan.

In 1888 these Kunjutis attacked some trade caravans from Yarkand, and carried off twenty-one Kirghiz from Shahidula. The Kirghiz applied to the Chinese for protection, but were informed by the Chinese Government that Shahidula was outside their line of Frontier, and as long as they lived there they could not expect protection from them.

The Kirghiz then applied to the Government of India for protection, who despatched a political officer, accompanied by a military escort to enquire into the matter, with a view of ascertaining what could be done to protect the trade route. This officer reached Shahidula in August, 1889, and leaving a small force of Kashmiri Sepoys there to protect the trade route for that autumn proceeded to Kunjut. In the following spring the Chinese awoke to their responsibilities, and sent some men to Sugeyt, and in the summer constructed a fort there, and the Government of India finding that their object (the protection of the trade route) was being carried out by the Chinese, took no further action in the matter, as it was clearly against their interests to have to extend their responsibilities right across the

main watershed, across those high and difficult passes, and through such a great extent of wild and sterile country, to a worthless spot like Shahidula.

It was much to be regretted, that the Chinese vacillated so much, and showed so much indecision, saying one year that the place did not belong to them, and the next year that it did. The Kirghiz offered their allegiance to the Indian Government, through the medium of the political officer before mentioned, but although it was not accepted, still, as a means of protecting themselves against the Kuhjutis, a sum of money was granted them for the repair of the old fort, which existed at Shahidula. Turdi Kol, the Kirghiz chief, to whom the money was entrusted by the Indian Government, got into trouble with the Chinese, his own tribe intriguing against him, notably one Islam Aksakal (or Islam of the white beard), who had received some of the money to spend in repairing the fort. The Chinese seized Turdi Kol, and threw him into prison at Yarkand, where he remains to this day.

Twelve months after the completion of the fort, the Chinese, at someone's instigation, quietly pulled it down, and built another one at Sugeyt. Shahidula is therefore no longer the Frontier between China and Ladák, the Chinese claiming up to the watershed of the Karakoram, and I believe their claim has been allowed by the Indian Government.

Ching Dolai having left cards upon us, it was

incumbent upon us to return the compliment, so we unpacked our Chinese cards, also printed on red paper, giving not only our names, but rank, profession, etc., and sent them over to that official's quarters.

The ice being thus broken, Ching Dolai put aside the reserve habitual to all Celestials, and came to our tents and chatted away *sans gêne*, for the best part of an hour. We considered this would be an excellent opportunity to broach the subject of provisions, for at the present moment, we only have three days' stores left for men and horses, and we require sufficient for thirty days to take us to the Pamirs, viz. twenty days' march, and ten days' for contingencies. So we boldly asked if the Fort could supply us with 5000 seers (4½ tons) of corn for our horses, 1000 seers of flour, 50 seers of rice, 15 seers of ghee, and 15 sheep for ourselves and men. The answer was that Prince Galitzin's caravan had passed through Sugeyt four days ago, and had taxed the resources of the Fort to such an extent, that there remained but 400 seers of grain, and 80 seers of flour, and that if we really required the very large amount we asked for, we should have to remain where we were for a month, while the provisions were being procured from Kargalik. We made Ching Dolai presents* of various things, in the hopes of softening

* We brought with us a few presents of various sorts, such as watches, musical boxes, watch-chains, ornamental match-boxes, combs, tooth-brushes, pipes, tobacco, cheroots, and various little nick-nacks.

his heart, and opening his store-rooms. I led off with a sham gold watch chain, and persevered with a pair of blue snow goggles, then Roche cut me out completely, by presenting a tin of Albert biscuits, and taking the little man's photograph, and promising him a "handsomely framed copy."

But all this generosity on our part availed nothing. Ching Dolai declared most solemnly it was not that he *would* not supply us, but that he *could* not. So there was but one thing left for us to do, and that was to proceed direct to Yarkand, nearly three weeks' march, and take our chance of going on to the Pamirs from there. There was no alternative.

We therefore quickly made up our minds to proceed at once to Yarkand with the three days' provisions we had in hand, taking with us all we could get from the Fort, which would be about five days' more stores, and that would take us as far as Sanju, where we could obtain enough supplies to last us to Bora, where more could be obtained to take us on to Yarkand, where we hope now to arrive the first week in August.

This all sounded very plausible to us, but when the project reached the ears of Ching Dolai he threw the iciest of cold water upon it at once, by telling us that the Sanju route to Yarkand was closed by the strict orders of the Emperor of China himself, owing to certain murderous attacks upon caravans having been made by those ubiquitous marauders, the Kunjutis, who

had slain a few Yarkandi traders on their way to Kashmir and India, and sold their caravan men as slaves.

The alternative route in this case was to go over the Kilian pass, that they declared to be fifteen miles in length, all of which at this time of the year is deep in snow. That meant losing at least half of our ponies, and we absolutely refused to entertain the idea for one moment.

"But," says Ching Dolai, "how can I allow your caravan to go by Sanju, when I have already refused permission to Prince Galitzin?" That argument being unanswerable, we thought it advisable to change the subject, being determined in our own minds to go by the Sanju route, and that, therefore, the least said about the matter, the better.

In the afternoon, Takhta Akhwand, a Yarkandi and Ching Dolai's interpreter, went to Ahmed Din's tent, and privately confided to him that Prince Galitzin had been five days attempting to cross the Kilian pass, and could not manage it, owing to the deep snow, and that his ponies were dying. Armed with this, to us, most valuable information, we asked the Chinaman if he knew at all where Prince Galitzin's caravan was now. He tried to evade the question, and on repeating it he attempted to get out of giving a direct reply, but signally failed. There was no way out of it! and we forced him to confess that he knew the Prince was in

difficulties, and unable to cross the pass. At this juncture, we again thought it better to let matters stand as they were, and to let Ahmed Din see what he could do quietly with the little man in the evening. In the meantime we thought it advisable to let him see our Chinese passports, so we gave them to Ahmed Din, and, as it turned out, it was the best card we could possibly have played. It was in this state of uncertainty that we retired to rest.

July 15th.—A messenger arrived this morning from Prince Galitzin's camp at the foot of the Kilian pass, saying that he would lose all his ponies unless he were enabled to change his route at once and go by the Sanju pass, as he was in sore straits.

Our passports had already deeply impressed Ching Dolai with a sense of our importance, the Albert biscuits had done their work nobly, and Prince Galitzin's message coming as it did, just in the nick of time, fairly finished our little Chinese friend, who had nothing more to say, except to implore us to give out at Yarkand that he had raised objections to our pursuing the Sanju route but, that as it was a question of life and death to both our caravan and the Prince's, he had, in pursuance of the terms of our passports, "allowed us to proceed on our journey, afforded us the protection stipulated by treaty, and had not hindered us nor obstructed us in any way."

Thus did we come out victorious! and as Ching Dolai was bound "to afford us the protection stipulated by treaty," we persuaded him without much difficulty to let us have Takhta Akhwand to accompany us to Yarkand as Chinese interpreter, for a certain important discovery very cleverly made by Ahmed Din placed somebody entirely at our mercy. So now we dictate our own terms, and it is well understood that we take all the provisions that can be spared from the Fort and start for Sanju to-morrow with a written "perwana" from Ching Dolai ordering every one to supply us with food on demand all the way to Yarkand. With minds at ease we retired to rest this night with everything in readiness to march in the morning. Altitude of Sugeyt Fort, 12,900 feet.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Leave Sugeyt Fort—Karakoram Ravens—Shahidula—Tomb of Aba Bakka Shah—Beautiful birds—Kirghiz encampment—A Traitor—A Block by the Karakash River—Ali Nazur Kurgan—Commencement of the Grim Pass.

July 16*th.*—Before we left the fort, Ching Dolai presented us with one hundred and sixty pounds of barley and a couple of sheep with tails nearly as big as their bodies, and he augmented this donation with one of his father's visiting cards, on which was inscribed his titles, rank, and the various official appointments he had held, from which we gathered that his name was also "Ching" with the prefix "Shay." He is an "Amban," having been Amban of Karashahr and also of Kuchar, and is now a sort of Deputy-Assistant Grand Vizier to the Governor-General of Urmutchi. He is, therefore, what an American would term, "one of the most prominent citizens and a man of considerable note" in Chinese Turkestan.

In taking leave of the various inmates of the fort I presented Idriz Bakhi with a watch, as he is the "Beg" of Sanju, and as such, can be exceedingly useful to us when we arrive there. He is on business now with

Ching Dolai, so he will not be able to meet us at Sanju himself, but he has given us a letter to his father and brother, to whose care he has consigned us, and we consider the watch well bestowed.

It was a nice fresh morning, after the rain of last night, and when we rode out of the gate of the fort, there were our old friends and companions, the two Karakoram ravens, who curiously enough, just as our men had foretold, allowed the caravan to proceed without attempting to follow it, and shortly afterwards spread their wings and flew back to the Karakoram pass. Our ponies looked all the better for their two days' rest, and so did the men, and we ourselves were not sorry for the repose, for it is very tiring work riding for eight or ten hours every day, week after week and month after month, at a foot's pace.

This morning we crossed a sandy plain for an hour and a half until we reached the Karakash river, which was very deep, but fordable in some places. The puzzle was to find the ford; Roche and I did *not*, so we each got a wetting. We had some difficulty in getting the sheep over; two of them tried to swim across but got carried away with the current. Eventually the men took them all over on the ponies. About midday we reached Shahidula, the place where we were to have turned off to go to the Pamirs. We looked regretfully at the nullah on our left, up which lay the route which we should have taken; but there was no help for it, and

as it was impossible to travel without food, we tried to think it was perhaps all for the best, as in the end it proved to be.

We saw the fort, or, rather, all that is left of it, for, as I mentioned before, the Chinese pulled most of it down two years ago.

We had to cross the river again about 3 P.M., when it was much more swollen, and we had rather a job with some of the ponies, but eventually got them all over in safety, and proceeded up a very grand nullah for about two hours and a half, until we reached some grass and a good spring of water. These two combined were too good to pass by, so we settled to camp there for the sake of the ponies, especially as the evening was dark and looked rather threatening. Altitude, 12,330 feet.

July 17th.—It was not until this morning that I realised what a lovely spot it was on which we had camped last night. There was mist on the hills and a thin rain when I first looked out, but it had all cleared off by 7 A.M., and the sun came out and lit up the whole landscape; and it was then I perceived what in the shades of yesterday evening I had missed seeing. Our tents were pitched on a grassy bank, sloping down to the river, and just at a bend where there was a slight rapid. All around were these great massive rocky mountains, any idea of whose gigantic proportions I feel utterly at a loss to convey. Behind these an

occasional snow-clad peak showed clear and white against the summer sky. The river, fringed here and there with the same graceful shrub I described before as growing on the banks of the Kardong, flows merrily between green grassy banks, until all of a sudden it meets sterner stuff in the shape of huge masses of broken rock, thrown about in the wildest but most picturesque confusion. In some places these banks are carpeted with a very pretty little purple flower; and, the most grateful boon of all, springs of the very purest water abound everywhere. This morning our path lay down the riverside in the same nullah, which opened out to our appreciative eyes new beauties at every turn. Riding through these grand solitudes, amongst this magnificent desolation, in this invigorating air, does not seem to weary us at all as it did in Western Tibet, where there was so much that was monotonous as well as beautiful. From 7 A.M. till 5 P.M., and sometimes later, we jog contentedly on, breathing an air that for strength and purity is unequalled, revelling in scenery that for splendour is unrivalled; and when we come to the end of the day's march, instead of being weary and glad it is over, we are almost sorry we have no further to go.

We went through a very fine country to-day. One particular spot attracted my attention, it was the ruins of an old Mahammadan fort, built before the first Chinese conquest of Yarkand and Kashgar, in the thirteenth

century, by Aba Bakka Shah,* whose tomb is close by. The view from this fort was splendid, looking north towards the Kilian range, up a gorge walled in by precipitous rocks that rose perpendicularly 3000 feet, forming, as it were, a frame for one of the finest creations that ever man's eye was permitted to rest upon. Involuntary I drew out my sketch-book, humbly I replaced it in its bag, ashamed of the temerity which induced me to think even for a moment that any puny efforts of mine could ever reproduce on paper such a scene as that before me. Tearing myself most unwillingly away from this beautiful picture I rode on and caught up the caravan just as they were crossing a river —name unknown—that flows down a nullah from the direction of the Kilian mountains, forming a junction with the Karakash river at right angles to it. The water was very rapid and deep, nearly up to our knees on horseback, but we got over all safe, although the

* Aba Bakka Shah, son of Jamak Agha, widow of Sanis. After Dost Mohamed's death she married Haidar, by whom she had two sons. But Sanis' son Aba Bakka was the favourite, who became an athlete, a soldier, and a cunning hunter. He collected three thousand followers and went to Yarkand, which he seized, and set himself up as independent ruler in succession to his father, Sanis Mirza. This took place in 1467 A.D. Aba Bakka reigned forty-eight years in Yarkand and conquered Kashgar in 1480 A.D., and nineteen years afterwards he subdued and conquered W. Tibet or Ladak. In 1515 A.D. he was defeated by Said, King of Samarkand and Khokar, and while returning to Khotan he was seized and killed in the Kara-Kash valley and buried there.

baggage got a little wet, especially that which was carried by the smaller ponies.

It was just after effecting the passage of this unknown river that Roche and I saw a most lovely bird, quite unlike any other we have ever seen either in books or collections. The head was a bright red, the breast a delicate pink, with grey wings and tail. It is not the first time we have come across beautiful specimens of the bird tribe. The other day when I was after antelope I came across one with a peacock-blue head, a magpie body, and the brightest of bright red tails. They are very numerous on the plains of Western Tibet, although we saw but two all the time we were riding through that country.

On the north side of this river we came upon a small Kirghiz encampment. This nomad race live in circular felt tents, which are called Akoi, signifying "white house." From one of these came an old Kirghiz, bringing with him a copper vessel full of deliciously fresh yak's milk, also a dish of clotted cream, both of which we took on with us to camp and had for dinner. Fresh milk was a great luxury to us as we had been without any for nearly a month, the goats that we had contracted for to take with us having failed to turn up at the moment of leaving Panamik.

We backsheeshed the old Kirghiz who presented us with the milk, and I was just on the point of making pretty speeches to him through our interpreter, when

Ahmed Din informed me that the old wretch was no less a person than Islam Akskal himself, who betrayed his own chief to the Chinese in the affair of the Shahidula Fort. A severe dust-storm coming on suddenly stopped my giving this old rascal a piece of my mind through the medium of Takta, and I rode on to catch up the caravan, which I found had come to a standstill at a most impassable-looking place on the side of a steep, rocky hill, and about a hundred feet above the river, where enormous rocks had been "avalanched" about in the very wildest confusion; and the only way to get the ponies across was to take off not only their loads but also their pack saddles, and make a road by filling up the large spaces between the rocks with them, the ponies walking over their own saddles until they reached safe ground on the other side, the men meanwhile carrying the loads across to a place of safety, where the ponies were re-saddled and re-loaded. To do all this with fifty-four ponies took some time, but was successfully accomplished, and after about two hours more of easy marching down the river side we chose a grassy spot and called a halt for the night. Altitude, 11,730 feet.

July 18*th*.—Another beautiful day for the march, not too hot nor yet too cold. Roche and I walked down the nullah by the side of the river until we came to a place presenting much the same difficulties as we

had to contend with yesterday, the only difference being that yesterday's block was on dry land, and the riddle to be solved to-day was how to get the baggage ponies round the base of a perpendicular rock which jutted out into a very deep and rapid pool in the river, without plunging the whole lot into the water. Along the edge of the rock a few feet above the pool was a narrow ledge just broad enough for a man to stand upon, and with some difficulty Roche and I walked along this and thus got round the base of the rock; but it was impossible to lead our ponies, they had to follow us, which they did with some difficulty. So it may be imagined what it must have been for the caravan. Each pony had to be unloaded, even to their pack saddles, as they were much too broad for them to carry over this narrow ledge, for the *land* side of the pack-saddle bumping against the side of the rock would have thrown the ponies off the ledge into the river. Therefore each of the fifty ponies had first to be sent along this ledge round the base of the rock by itself, and though one false step would have put them in the river, the clever little animals all arrived in safety on the other side. Then there was the whole baggage of the camp to be carried by the men over this ledge, piece by piece, tents, yak-dans, kiltas, ammunition boxes, gun cases, bullock trunks, sacks of grain, loads of wood, and all the hundred and one things that go to make up the equipage of a large caravan. I

thick it reflects great credit on Ramzan to have accomplished this without either a horse or a box getting wet. There is not the slightest doubt that the men we have with us are the very best pony-men in the world; they are the hardest workers I ever saw; with a thorough knowledge of their business, they are always cheery, and generally sing when things look blackest. This little episode over, we resumed the march, and about noon arrived at another Kirghiz encampment.

Finding a spring of good water we took our lunch there, and the Kirghiz sat in a circle and gazed at us. Seeing they had a lot of very good looking yaks we made a bargain with them and hired forty of those useful beasts of burden to take our baggage over the Grim pass to-morrow, as it is impossible to take laden ponies across. We also left one of our ponies in their charge, as he was much too lame to take with us; whether we shall ever set eyes upon him again time will show. It sounds rather a casual sort of proceeding, but it often happens that a trader from Yarkand has

* The Kirghiz in this part of Chinese Turkestan are all Sunni Mahamadans. They live in their felt tents and wander about from place to place with their yaks, camels, sheep, and goats, cultivating here and there a little barley. As a rule they are tolerably well off, as they pay no rent to Government for their grazing; but as a *quid pro quo* the Government take twenty men every year to serve in the Fort at Sugeyt, paying them 3½ charrucks of flour per month.

half a dozen lame ponies in his caravan, which he cannot take on with him, so he is very glad to be able to leave them in a Kirghiz encampment until they have recovered or died. In the former case the Kirghiz send the ponies on to Yarkand by the first caravan going that way (and it is a sort of mutual understanding between traders to do this for each other), and the owner of the ponies rewards the Kirghiz according to the length of time they kept them. In the latter case, viz. the pony dying, no money changes hands.

Near to this Kirghiz encampment was an old ruined fort and four or five rather smart tombs, each enclosed within its four walls. One in particular had a sort of dome and cupola, and is the resting-place of a great Kirghiz chief named Cheelanchi Bai. The fort was built by Ali Nazur, a rather celebrated personage who flourished, as far as I could gather from these Kirghiz, about the beginning of this century.

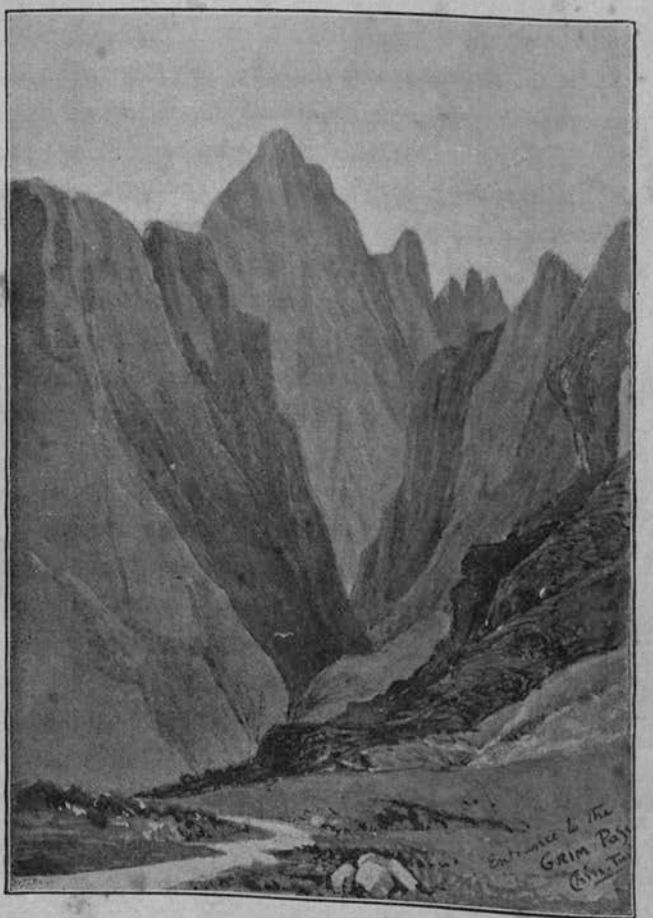
He appears to have misbehaved himself in some way at Khokand, from which place he was expelled by Alimkul, the ruler of that province. Ali Nazur, therefore, chose this spot to live in and prosecute his operations, which much resembled those of Dick Turpin and Claude Duval, his principal clients being the Yarkandi traders, on whose caravans he levied blackmail, failing which he and his forty men did a little murdering. The Chinese, although masters of the country, did not interfere with him, but allowed him to

have his own way; indeed, they rather encouraged him, for they actually paid him an annual sum of money to remain where he was, and not extend his operations. At last he became such a nuisance that Alimkul sent a party of Kirghiz against him with orders to bring him in dead or alive. These men waited until his forty followers were absent on a raid at Kulchuskum, then entered the fort by night and shot Ali Nazur dead.

After the death of Ali Nazur the Chinese pulled down the fort, but the place bears his name to this day, viz., Ali Nazur Kourgan, Kourgan signifying fort in Turki.

On quitting this historical spot we turned off in a northerly direction, leaving the Karakash river, and followed up the water-course of the Boschut, which is quite a small stream, until we entered the Kilian range of mountains, where we soon found ourselves in a very narrow defile, which is the commencement of the pass called the "Grim," and by some geographers the "Sanju," but why the latter I cannot pretend to say, as Sanju is a Turki village six days' march away from the pass, with which it has no connection whatever. The ascent up this defile was very abrupt and very difficult for the ponies, many of which fell down several times; in fact, we should have done better to load our yaks before we entered the pass, instead of sending them on ahead to wait for us half way. But no one knew anything about it, as the last English

caravan that crossed this pass was that of Sir Douglas



ENTRANCE TO THE GRIM PASS.

Forsyth's, in 1873, when on his mission to Yarkand.

The scenery was very grand, and as wild as anything we have seen yet.

We took the altitude when we entered the pass and it was 10,780 feet, and in less than two hours we took it again and it was 13,880 feet. Sometimes it seemed as if it would be impossible to get any further on, our passage being apparently barred by huge walls of rock rising some 1500 and 2000 feet perpendicularly from the side of the river up which we were veritably toiling, and the stream itself flowed through large boulders that we thought no pony could possibly scramble over. The baggage suffered severely from too close an acquaintance with the rocks in the very narrow places, the iron clamps on the corners of the yak-dans being in many instances broken off. At last after taking two hours to do as many miles, we came to a very curious place in the narrowest part of the pass; there was a large rock jutting out into the stream, the inside of which had been scooped out by the falling of a glacier or an avalanche, and there was therefore nothing but the mere shell left. In this shell there was just room for the tents, and we camped there for the night. We found the Kirghiz and their forty yaks awaiting us, and before we got our tents pitched it came on to sleet.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Grim Pass—Loss of two Baggage-animals over a Precipice—Dangerous descent—Beautiful grass Country—Kichik Ilak—Kirghiz encampment—Civility of Natives—Tahm—Caravan stopped by flooded Rivers—Explore Choo-Choo Pass and Poskee River—Kirzil-Iga—Sanju.

July 19*th*.—Last night the sleet turned to snow, and when we rose at 4 A.M. the whole ground was white, and our tents covered with snow. It was a bad look-out for us having to cross such a steep pass in a snow-storm, especially as it would be very deep going after snowing all night. However, we could not remain where we were to be snowed up, and having finished one half of the pass, we thought we had better hazard the other. So we loaded up the yaks, after having selected the quietest looking for ourselves to ride, and started the caravan off, driving the ponies unloaded in front.

It was so thick all round that we could see absolutely nothing. The two hours and ten minutes we took to reach the summit were spent in mounting up from 13,880 to what we roughly estimated would be about 17,500; but the aneroids were left by mistake in the holsters,

on the riding-ponies which were a long way behind. When we reached the summit in a thick snowstorm, we were only too glad to get down the other side as quick as ever we could before losing our way, and to wait for the ponies with the instruments was out of the question.

From the camping-place to the summit was far and away the most precipitous bit of climbing we had yet experienced. All the other passes in the Himalayas that we had anything to do with were child's play to the "Grim." It was just as much as the yaks could do to get on at all, and once or twice when some of them absolutely stuck in the snow and refused to move, we thought we should be beat after all. The last 800 feet were almost perpendicular, and there we had several accidents, two of which were fatal. Nearly all our ponies, unloaded as they were, fell, and some of them slipping up, rolled backwards down the hill, but got pulled up by friendly snow-drifts that saved their lives, and they only sustained slight injuries; while others were not so fortunate. One grey mare, about the best pony we had, fell down, and rolling over the precipice, was killed dead on the spot; and a baggage-animal belonging to one of the Kirghiz shared the same fate. Why more were not killed was a wonder to me. Even the yaks slipped and fell, and the baggage got very much knocked about, two of my yek-dans being smashed. None of the men were hurt, although many of them had had

falls; but they all agreed afterwards it was the worst pass they had ever crossed. The summit of the mountain was of most peculiar formation. Instead of having a reasonable top like any other well-regulated mountain, it had nothing but a razor-back ridge about six feet broad as an apology for a top, and a yawning precipice of nearly 3000 feet* on the other side. The descent was most dangerous, and we dismounted from our yaks, as it looked almost impossible for any animal to get down with a man on his back; but after walking a short distance, it was so very slippery I got a nasty fall, and was nearly over the precipice myself, so I remounted my yak with no little difficulty, and trusted to the surefootedness of that invaluable animal to take me down in safety. After two hours of this break-neck work, during which time my yak slithered two or three times in a most alarming manner (at each of which "slither" I thought my last moment had come), we got into more practicable sort of ground, and shortly afterwards left the snow behind us. We emerged from the dark mist into the brightness and the light of day, and never was I so astonished when the veil was raised, and I gazed at the scene that lay before me. On the north side of the pass lay the most beautiful grass country imaginable, grass up to the tops of the hills, grassy slopes, grassy downs,

* Measured the next day by Roche, who returned on purpose to take altitudes, as 2750 ft.

everywhere green—it put new life into us, and we hastened to get down to this land flowing with milk and honey. By midday we reached the large Kirghiz encampment of Kichik-Ilak, where the people came out to welcome us, bringing us presents of milk, butter, and creamy curds. They also prepared an Akoi for us, which we used as a dining-room when we *did* eventually get something to eat; but the cookery department got lost in the snow on the pass, and did not come into camp for four hours after we had arrived, and as we had eaten our *chota hazari* at 4.30 A.M. and very *chota* it was at that cold and early hour, and had been eleven hours without eating, we were very glad when the yak appeared that carried the food.

The spot where we camped was simply too lovely for words. Our tents were pitched on the greenest of grassy downs, and a little river ran just below us. From the doors of our tents we looked up a long, steep green glen, through which a little burn came tumbling over huge boulders in dozens of miniature waterfalls. All up the glen, and on each side of it, were long grassy slopes covered with yaks, sheep and goats, some of them feeding so high up that they appeared but small black specks; and at the further end the huge granite rocks that seemed to rise up into the deep blue sky, were topped by a magnificent snow-clad peak, at least 6000 feet above us, we being at an elevation of 12,900 feet above the sea level. On the right of our camp, over

the green downs on which hundreds of marmots ran in and out of their holes, could be seen the snowy peaks of the range that we had just crossed, and to the left were more downs, on which were situated the tents of the Kirghiz encampment, behind which were just visible, in the western sky, the jagged peaks of many a giant in the Kilian range. Look which way you would, your eyes rested on a picture which, for beauty and grandeur, could scarcely be surpassed.

I thought at one time that no scenery could equal that of Kashmir, until I saw the valley of the Shyok in Western Tibet, and now the beauties of Kashmir and the splendour of Ladak pale beside the magnificence of the scenery in the Highlands of Chinese Turkestan.

Before retiring to rest we made up our minds not to march to-morrow for several reasons; first, both ponies and men required a rest after the arduous labours of to-day; second, the baggage stood in need of overhauling and repairing after the severe knocking about it got this morning; third, all the tents required drying; fourth, it was necessary to take a day off for washing clothes and baking, as we had no bread; last, and not least, Roche wanted to return to the pass, provided the weather was fine, and take the altitude at the summit, and also some photographs.

So orders were given to that effect, to the satisfaction of all hands.

July 20th.—The early morn was lovely, and gave promise of a glorious day, which was fully realised; so, armed with aneroid and camera, Roche left the camp early on his yak and set out for the pass. Meanwhile I set two men to do the washing in the little river below the camp, and Sehr Singh to do the ironing, at which he is now quite an adept; and what between repairing broken bullock trunks and yak-dans, cleaning saddles and bridles, opening the baggage to see what had been broken yesterday, drying the tents, mending torn clothes, darning stockings, baking bread, making fresh butter from yaks' milk, and various other duties, our day was fully occupied.

Roche returned in the afternoon, having taken several photographs, and also the altitude of the pass, which was 17,530 feet, 30 feet higher than we estimated it yesterday. Curiously enough, he suffered to-day from his head up in the high altitude, and his Kirghiz guide was so bad that he kept holding his head between his hands all the time they were up there, whereas yesterday, in the cold and snow, none of us felt any discomfort whatever.

In the evening some of the Kirghiz came to our camp to be doctored. One woman, with rather a picturesque white headdress, brought a nice-looking little boy, about six years old, who bore in his little hands a dish of clotted cream, which he presented to us. Having no interpreter at hand, it was rather difficult to carry on a

conversation in Turki. I tried speaking Turkish to her, but there is little or no similarity between the two languages. However, I gathered from signs that she was suffering from rheumatism, and gave her some Elliman's Embrocation, as well as a backsheesh for the cream. After making preparations for to-morrow's march, we all retired to a well-earned rest.

July 21*st*.—Bade adieu to our Kirghiz friends, who were busy shearing their stock.

It was a very pretty pastoral scene, all the different coloured goats on the downs, and the people and the dogs busy working amongst them, and for a background the green glen, the grey rocks and the big snow-capped hill overshadowing all. I felt almost sorry to leave the place, it seemed so homely like, for it is a long time since we have seen little children playing on green grass or heard the bark of a dog.

We rode down the Sanju river through a broad nullah, where we picked up the horn of an ibex, an indication of the presence of those animals in this country, which was a revelation to us.

After a five hours' ride we came to the junction of the Tahm Aghiz river with the Sanju. Here was a Kirghiz graveyard, little earthen mounds with rough headstones. We crossed the Sanju river to-day six times without any difficulty, and, camping about a mile north-east of the junction of the two rivers in a grassy

glade surrounded by wild rocky hills, we feasted our eyes on a real live tree, the first we have seen for many a long day.

The temperature has altered considerably, for we are now at an altitude lower than any since we crossed the Zojila, more than two months ago. We have come

KICHIK ILAK, CHINESE TARTARY.

down 3375 feet to-day, from 12,900 (Kichik ilak) to 9525, the present altitude of our camp; so, as we considered ourselves quite in the tropics, we dined out of doors in summer clothing, and very pleasant and balmy the soft night air was.

July 22nd.—We had hoped to reach Sanju to-day by taking a short cut through the hills following the river,

by which route we should have avoided the Choo Choo pass and a long round by the Poskee river. We started with that intention; but when we saw the state of the Yangaghlak river, and crossed it without being able to keep dry, our hopes were shattered, for this river, as well as another (name unknown), flows into the Sanju. To reach the village of Sanju we should have to cross the river thirteen times *after* it had received the waters of these two other rivers, one of which alone was already in too great flood to enable our ponies to cross in safety. Therefore to attempt to cross the big river thirteen times would have been sheer madness, especially as it has been raining all night up in the hills. We therefore abandoned all idea of the short cut, and altered our course from north to east half-south by the compass, and headed up the nullah, out of which flows the Yangaghlak. After riding for two miles up this river we changed our course again to north-east, and climbing a steep cherai found ourselves in a high narrow defile which we conjectured (and rightly) must be the entrance to the Choo Choo pass. We took the altitude at the Yangaghlak river, making it 8980, and when we reached the top of the Choo Choo pass in the afternoon at 4.30 P.M. we had risen 3525 feet, the altitude at the summit of the pass being 12,500 feet. It was a very long and a very steep pass, where several of our ponies came to grief with their loads, and Ramzan got hurt in trying to save a pony and load rolling down over some

rocks. We estimated the length of the pass, from the entrance of the defile to the summit, to be eight miles.

When we got to the top it was all enshrouded in mist, so we could not see the view; but judging from what we saw when we descended into the Choo Choo Jilga and got out of the clouds, we must have missed a very fine panoramic view. The descent was short, but very steep, and we had in consequence to walk it. There was no snow, and the whole pass was grass and sand and sandstone rocks. Looking down, the hills on the east side were steep green slopes, while on the west side were bare precipitous rocks, on the tops of which we saw eight ibex, all females. After a long tiring march of twenty-two miles, we halted at a good camping-ground, with lots of grass for the ponies and good spring-water for ourselves, and there we spent the night. Altitude, 9430 feet.

July 23rd.—Roche and I shot our way down the Choo Choo Jilga, killing a good few chikore and rock pigeons. The country we passed through was sufficiently uninteresting to warrant my saying nothing about it. We followed the Poskee river all day in every sense of the word, because, if we crossed it once, we certainly crossed it considerably more than thirty times. About 4 P.M. we saw in the distance, trees and some houses, and we fancied it might be the village of Sanju; but when we came up to them, we found it was only a sort of

farm, consisting of two houses and outhouses under some fruit trees, and fringed with poplars and a few large willows on the bank of the Poskee. These were the first houses we had seen for twenty-three days. On seeing us approach, two women came out and offered us white mulberries, apricots and curds and whey. While we were eating the fruit, we, by the greatest good luck in the world, caught sight of Ramzan on the opposite side of the river with the caravan. On inquiry from the people at the farm, we discovered we were still twelve miles from Sanju, and while we were discussing the advisability of proceeding on, or remaining where we were for the night, the river decided it for us. It came down all of a sudden in a perfect torrent. We had noticed it was rising, but had no idea that it would so soon be absolutely impassable. As it was, when we called the caravan over, some of the ponies floundered about up to their necks, and some of the baggage fell off into the water. I had the extreme gratification of seeing my tent washed off one of the ponies and float down with the turbid current. Luckily Tashi Sonnum was standing on the edge of the water, helping some ponies to land, and he made a grab at it and fished it out as it swirled past him. Had we not overtaken the caravan and crossed the river at this particular spot, we should have had to camp further on in a sandy desert, with no water for ourselves and no grass for the ponies, on the opposite side to

the farm, and we could not have crossed the river again to-day. Instead of this, we have the most excellent camping-ground under some large trees, the ponies are up to their bellies in grass, and we have good spring water, and last, and not least, all the good things these excellent and hospitable Turkestani folk have presented us with, viz. sweet milk, fresh butter, curds and whey, apricots, mulberries, etc., and a splendid sheep.

I went and made friends with these good people and inquired all about their family history. It appeared that their forefathers settled in this wild and secluded spot about two hundred years ago, and the family have been represented there ever since. The present holders of the little farm consist of an old lady, whose name is Selima Khoja, a widow with one son and one daughter, the son's name being Alim Din Khoja and the daughter's Haji Khoja. Alim Din is married, and his wife's name is Sopore. Haji Khoja is also married, and her husband's name is Ali, and both couples have little children, daughters, one named after the grandmother, the other rejoicing in the name of Raza Aghacha. Their little farm, which is very prettily situated on the banks of the Poskee river, produces annually about twenty charruks of wheat and barley (about 320 lbs. weight of grain), and they only harvest one crop per annum. They have a large orchard of fruit trees, which were planted by some of their forefathers, viz. apricot, mulberry, and apple trees.

Their live stock consists of thirty-five sheep and goats. They keep no ponies and no yaks. For the cereal crop they pay annually a rent to the Chinese Government of fifteen Tongas, equal to three rupees. For their fruit crop they pay no rent. By this it will be seen that they are very much better off than the ordinary Zemindar of the Punjab.

The men are fine big fellows, without any peculiarity of physiognomy, except perhaps their extreme fairness of skin. Their dress is a long coarse shirt, gathered in at the waist with a small cummerbund, at which hangs a large knife; their feet are bare, and on the head they wear a little skull-cap, but no turban.

The women's faces are flattish, with very pink and white complexions; their eyebrows are painted, and meet in a straight line over the nose. For headdress they wear a small white cap, with an embroidered border, the top of the cap being shaped almost like a bishop's mitre; their hair, which is quite black, is done in two long plaits that they bring to the front over the shoulders. Their clothes are scanty, decidedly, consisting of a white loose chemise of some stuff of coarse texture, with a little coloured embroidery in front between the neck and the bosom; this chemise reaches down below the knee, and under it can be seen loose white trousers gathered in at the ankle, the foot being bare. As they have no attempt at girdle or waist-belt, it would be impossible to say what

their figures are like. The kindness and hospitality they evinced towards our men was almost overpowering. They insisted upon doing all the cooking for them, gave them the best of everything they had, and told them they might pick as much fruit as ever they liked, for I had just told Ramzan to let the caravan men know that any one touching an apple or apricot in the orchard would be severely punished. In return for all this our men gave them copper rings they had bought in Ladak for about half an anna each, but which these unsophisticated folk reckoned of great value. Altitude, 7805 feet.

July 24th.—The sheep these good people gave us yesterday is a most fascinating animal, of a very pretty colour, and with the most beautiful "dress improver" of pure white, almost like a yak's tail; he is as tame as possible, and came and paid me a visit this morning while I was eating my Chota Hazari. I fed him with bread, and when he wanted more he put one foot upon my knee, just like a dog. So orders have been issued that he is to be kept as a pet, and not made into mutton chops, and that the men are to treat him with that deference which, as "the pet of the caravan," will be his due. After giving our kind hosts and hostesses a substantial backsheesh we turned our horses' heads towards Sanju, that place we have been trying to arrive at for the last three days, but every night when

we camped seemed to be farther off than ever. At length, after riding for about four hours through a hideous sandy waste, we came upon a veritable oasis in the midst of sandy hills and desert plains. I never saw such a profusion of fruit. Every tree we passed was a fruit tree, and every tree seemed unable to bear the amount of fruit with which it was weighted. We rode through fields of wheat, barley, and maize, under apricot, peach, apple, and walnut trees, over melon beds, etc.; but for all this lavish profusion of fruit we could not find a drop of water fit to drink, nor a piece of grass on which to pitch our camp. We wandered about for a long time until we arrived at the bazaar of the village. Near this was a sort of common, and as there was fairish water in the neighbourhood we camped there. Altitude, 6830 feet.

Sanju is a large straggling village, with a population of four thousand people, all Mahammadans. It consists of a series of small farms or large gardens, and contains 700 houses, each with its fruit orchard and few acres of cultivation. As two rivers flow through this valley there is a large water supply and storage, the whole settlement being artificially irrigated. The produce of the land comprises wheat, barley, peas, maize, and oilseed; and of the fruit orchards peaches, mulberries, walnuts, pears, plums, apricots, melons, apples. The pears are famous, but, unfortunately for us, are not yet ripe. We had, however, many presents

made us, not only of fruit, but of sheep and barley. The relatives of Iddriz Bakki, the Beg of this place, to whom I gave the watch at Sugeyt fort, came soon after our tents were pitched, and, after profuse salaaming, presented us with one sheep, one charruk (16 lbs.) of rice, ten charruks of barley for the ponies, tea, sugar, and huge baskets of peaches, apricots, apples, etc. He and his deputation having departed, Yakub Akhwand, head Zemindar of Sanju, appeared, armed with two sheep, ten charruks of barley, two donkey loads of wood, a basket of fresh baked bread, a plate of tobacco, and a dozen fresh laid eggs. All these things we must accept, or insult the donor. Needless to say, ample remuneration in the form of backsheesh of course follows. Not to be outdone by his "boss," Nur Nulla Akhwand, assistant Beg of Sanju, brought one sheep, a basket of eggs, and fruit *ad libitum*, including lots of melons.

After dinner we had such a choice of dessert that we hardly knew what to begin with; but I think, on the whole, the peaches suffered most. If we ate too much we must be forgiven, as fruit was a luxury we had not enjoyed for a long time.

July 25th.—To-day was a day of rest. In the morning we had "stables," every pony being minutely examined by Roche. Pack saddles were inspected and cast, or the contrary; those that were worn out were

restuffed. Baggage examined and yak-dans mended, and every preparation made for the march to Yarkand.

There is a bazaar held here once a week, and by the greatest luck it happened to be held to-day. The stalls, which yesterday were empty, were occupied to-day as follows: Five bakers, four iron smelters and tin-smiths, two butchers, six sellers of Yarkandi caps, one dealer in copper vessels, one basket-maker, four dealers in spices, fifteen dealers in stuffs, viz. cottons, cloths, silk pieces, etc., and one mender of broken china cups. Ten horses and fifteen donkeys were put up for sale, and several sheep. There were, needless to add, fruit sellers *ad libitum*.

The silks were all from Khotan and the cloths from Russia, also locks and scissors from the same country. There were English-made long cloth handkerchiefs, printed locally; but the chief article of trade was the Yarkandi caps. All the spices came from India. The system of barter, which is quite inseparable from trade, prevailed. One house was occupied by some Mahammadan officials, where all goods that were to be offered for sale were brought, and a duty of one and a half per cent. charged on every article, which in the case of ponies varied from six to ten per cent. All articles are brought before the officials, who, after receiving the duty chargeable, put a red seal upon them, and in the case of ponies and donkeys they are marked with a red-hot iron; this is to indicate that the

article or animal is lawfully saleable. Anything offered for sale without this seal or mark is confiscated, in addition to the imposition of a heavy fine. The tax collector is a Chinese official, who comes here once a week expressly for the purpose.

The land is taxed in the following manner. The tax is fixed on the spot after inquiry as to the good or bad condition of the soil, and is paid partly in money, partly in kind.

The following are the usual rates. One and a half Charruks of seed sown in the land is equal to one Mo. Ten Shing make one Charruk. Fifteen Shing make one and a half Charruks, or one Mo. The Government takes four Shing from every Mo of wheat and barley.

There is no tax on any other cereal or on fruit.

The market-place was crowded all day, and as our camp is within a stone's-throw of it we have had an admiring crowd, but worse than anything were the donkeys. There are thirty or forty trees round the bazaar and near our camp. To each of these trees has been tied a donkey, and each donkey tried with his neighbour as to who could bray the loudest. Therefore, from 8 A.M. till this afternoon, we have had forty donkeys braying in parts, in unison, and occasionally a soloist. It has driven us to the brink of insanity. I noticed a good many women to-day at the market, all riding donkeys and wearing the same caps as our friends at the farm yesterday, only with long white

veils down their backs, and their clothing, I noticed, was not quite so scanty as the others. But then this is "town," and the other is "country;" and if the Sanju woman *is* better and more amply clothed than her unsophisticated country sister, still there exists under the coarse chemises of Haji Khoja and Sopore, in their humble abode on the banks of the Poskee river, a kindliness of heart and rough-and-ready hospitality that could not be surpassed by their more civilised sisters of Sanju.

CHAPTER XX.

Leave Sanju—Difficulty in crossing the River in flood—Oasis in Desert—Kostagh—Oi Taghragk—Borah—Besherek—Kargalik—Chinese Amban—Marvellous wealth of Fruits—Crossing Karajilga River—Karchi—Camels over Tiznaf River—A disturbed night.

July 26th.—When we left Sanju, which we did without any regrets, the whole country was enveloped in a thick, hot haze, which I am led to believe, on the authority of the natives, is its normal state; but then these people have a peculiar knack of answering a question by invariably agreeing with the sense in which the query is put. For instance, if I were to say, "I suppose it's always hazy and cloudy at Sanju?" with a note of interrogation in my voice, the native would reply, "Always," or "Yes." And if Roche, half an hour afterwards were to say, "I suppose it is very seldom you get such cloudy, hazy weather here," the same native would reply, "Very seldom." It is exactly the same on the march. You can make Takhta, the interpreter, say how many miles it is, by suggesting that you suppose it is about fifteen miles *more;* he immediately agrees with

the supposition, although it may be only six, or perhaps is twenty. They have no idea of distance or its computation, they can only give you a distance by its relative length with some other march.

The beautiful clear weather with which we have been blessed throughout the whole time seems to have deserted us since we left Kichikilak, as we have never seen the sun since. A low, warm, unwholesome sort of haze, or mist, has hung over the land, and in Sanju itself became almost oppressive, especially as the place lies very low, and is frightfully damp. It was no doubt an unhealthy spot, as we have already one or two fresh cases of fever in the camp reported to-night. Yesterday evening it began to rain at 9.30, and continued till 3 A.M. this morning, and the ominous roar we heard on waking warned us that the river was in flood; so we postponed attempting to cross it until midday, when we hoped it would have partially subsided. We went ahead of the caravan to see whether it were possible to get across, and after several ineffectual attempts, in one of which my horse was taken off his legs by the current, which gave me a wetting, we managed to land on the opposite shore. The river was very broad, being broken up into eight or ten channels, only three of which, however, were dangerous. By 12.15 noon it had subsided 1 foot 9 inches, which made a great difference, and by 1 P.M. we had the whole caravan safe on the north side, with

only one accident. Sehr Singh and Subhana, being on foot, jumped on to one pony to get across. The weight of the two was too much, and the pony turned completely over in the middle, sending them both headlong into the water. When we left the river we headed north-west, and crossing a sandy pass of 7000 feet, descended again into a low, flat, shingly desert, stretching all round as far as the eye could reach. Through this we rode for five hours, until we reached a little oasis of about fifty acres of crop, with a few trees and two mud houses. Here dwelt two brothers, who gave us all the hospitality the place afforded, and we camped there for the night. The place is called Salghuz Lungar, and there is a small river here, called the Salghuz. Hence the oasis. Altitude, 6580 feet.

July 27th.—Left Salghuz Lungar and continued our journey through the same uninteresting and monotonous desert until we reached Kostagh, another large oasis, like Sanju, being a collection of fruit gardens and fields of corn, with about 300 straggling houses built of mud. The place is so shut in with these fruit orchards and thick plantations of poplar and willow that hardly any houses are visible at all.

We are camped in a large orchard of apricot trees so overweighted with fruit that if there be any more wind in the night we shall get no sleep at all, for the fruit is falling on the roofs of our tents already like an

exaggerated hailstorm. The head man of the village came with the usual offerings of fruit, bringing also two sheep, and some barley for the ponies. This system of presenting fruit, sheep, eggs, barley, etc., is a most excellent one for the donor, as one is obliged to accept them in the spirit of a voluntary offering; but in the morning the donor comes to be paid in full value for his so-called gift, and is much hurt if the payment is not augmented by a substantial backsheesh. We had a long fast to-day. We took our *chota hazari* at 6.30 A.M., and we never saw the "General" and the tiffin basket till 3.40 P.M., so by the time the fire was lighted for hot water to make our tea it was 4 P.M. So we had a late breakfast. Altitude, 6400 feet.

July 28th.—As it poured with rain most of the night the head man of the village came to inform us that we would be unable to cross the Kilian river to-day, which was reported to be in flood. I thought very likely this was only a ruse to try and make us stop another day in the village, as a caravan such as ours is a perfect god-send to those people who have not set eyes upon a European since twenty years ago, so I asked how far the river was, and finding it was only four miles from the village, I rode out with the head-man and Takhta, leaving the rest in camp. When we got to the river, which was just like the Sanju, that it is to say broad, but broken up into eight or ten channels, it certainly looked very

formidable, being much swollen. However, I had to find a fordable place, or else we should have to remain where we were till it subsided. So after a deal of floundering about, and getting very wet, I eventually found a place which I thought we might risk trying, as I knew by the time the caravan reached the river, it would be getting on for midday, and by a mark I made I found the water was falling at a very quick rate. Still there would be a great difference between a heavily laden pony crossing, and my horse and myself. About noon the caravan arrived, and we piloted them over in safety, with the exception of three ponies who came to grief. The unfortunate Subhana, who got a ducking in the Sanju, being the first victim. His pony was carried right under water by the current, and he was dragged down with it; secondly, the pony carrying one of my yak-dans full of medicines also got swept down the river, and his load was submerged for some time; the third was nearly being a more serious affair, as the pony never seemed to make any effort to save himself, but was literally swept down by the torrent, with three men clutching on to him; but, by dint of holding on tight, they managed to get him ashore in safety.

We rested a bit after effecting this crossing before resuming our journey across the same sort of desert as yesterday, a dead flat as far as the eye could reach. It was terribly tedious work, and we did not reach Oitaghragk till 6 P.M.

Oi-taghragk is exactly a counterpart of Kostagh and Kostagh is a counterpart of Sanju. They are all oases in a desert plain, dependent upon water for their very existence.

To-day it rained in the afternoon, but as we have not got a river to cross to-morrow, we are not so much interested in the weather. The change of scene, of climate, of temperature, and of atmosphere, have, I think, affected our spirits. Where we had last week beautiful mountain scenery, we have now a succession of arid deserts. We have exchanged the fresh crisp air of the hills for the heavy misty fogs and stuffy atmosphere of a plain only 6000 feet above the sea level; 13,000 feet have we descended since the Karakoram; and nearly 12,000 since we quitted the highlands of Chinese Turkestan at Kichikilak, where we seem to have left everything good behind us, including the sun and the blue sky, neither of which have we set eyes on for a week. We shall be very glad when we reach Yarkand, as riding all day, and every day through these stuffy hot deserts is monotonous and tiring to a degree. Altitude, 6130 feet.

July 30th.—Rode yesterday from Oi-taghragk to Borah, through a desert of sandy hills. Borah is another oasis of fruit orchards and wheat and barley fields. It is a much bigger place than Oi-taghragk. Rassoul, the cook, came into camp with his ponies at

such a late hour, that we did not get dinner until 11.40 P.M., when having had nothing since breakfast we were rather hungry. To-day we rode to Besherek (another oasis), over a most melancholy desert. The amount of devils * we saw was surprising. We counted twenty-one going on at the same time. Some were very large, and went up to a great height. The heat in this desert country is most trying, and the glare is terrible. As the rivers flowing through these oases are in flood, we have nothing but muddy water like pea-soup to drink and wash in. We camped at Besherek, a most uninteresting place, in fact the whole way from Sanju there is absolutely no point of interest, for the whole country is as flat as the Fen district in England; indeed, the cultivated region all around Besherek reminded me very much of the scenery between Ely and Peterborough.

The heat is beginning to be very severe, and we feel it all the more, from having been living for three months at altitudes ranging from 10,000 to 19,000 feet above the sea-level. The people here say, "If you call this heat, wait till you get to Yarkand." Had we been here in June, I think we should have found the same sort of heat that our friends are now suffering

* Whirlwinds that catch up the sand or dust and form a column like smoke, and travel along the ground. They are very common in the plains of India, where they are called by the natives *Bagoola*. English people in India call them "devils."

from in the plains of India. The worst of it is that we were not prepared for this sort of climate, for, as very few Europeans has ever been here, there was no one to advise us before we started to bring our lightest summer clothing with us. Altitude, 5130 feet.

July 31*st*.—After a warm night, during which the minimum temperature was 72° outside our tents, we rose at 5 A.M. to find it raining, so we hastened to get the tents struck before they got too wet to pack, and made a start for Kargalik. We had already given our Chinese cards to Takhta over night for him to take early in the morning to the "Amban," * so when we were about five miles from the town we were met by a smartly dressed Chinese official on horseback, who presented us with the Amban's cards, which were nearly as large as an ordinary sized pocket-handkerchief with a few Chinese hieroglyphics printed on red paper in one corner. Two other horsemen had also arrived in our camp from Yarkand that morning, namely, Mahammad Yakub, a leading trader of that city who had been sent

* The Amban is an official best described as a Provincial Assistant Governor; next above him is the Taotai, or Governor, and over all the Fu-Tai, or Governor-General of the Sin-Chiang, whose seat of Government is at Urumtchi. He, under him, has one Chief Secretary at Urumtchi, and two Taotais, one at Aksu, another at Kashgar, and they again have Ambans under them. The Amban of Yarkand is one of the chief of all the Ambans of Kargalik, Khotan, etc.

by the Aksakal,* Mahammad Yunnus, with a letter excusing himself from coming so far to meet us, owing to a press of business, and deputing Mahammad Yakub to represent him and give us every assistance along the road. The other was Mahammad Rahim, who had been sent also by the Aksakal to Kilian to meet us, thinking naturally we should come by that route, but when he got Ahmed Din's letter (sent by special messenger from Sanju) saying we should arrive in Yarkand on such and such a day *viâ* Sanju, he sent to Kilian to tell Mahammad Rahim to change his route and meet us at Kargalik. This latter had brought with him, in addition to a letter, a *dosterkhan*, † or present consisting of fruits of various kinds, bread and sweetmeats, with which he presented us on behalf of the Aksakal. So when we rode into the town of Kargalik we had a most imposing escort.

* Aksakals, literally grey-beards. When the Chinese first took possession of Kashgar and Yarkand and drove out the Andijan Khojas, they made several concessions to them, amongst which was the appointment of commercial agents, representatives of the Khokand Government, to reside in the large towns and look after the Andijani's interests, but as these agents, together with the Andijanis, intrigued against the Chinese Government, they were disestablished by the latter and Aksakals were appointed in their stead, men representing their different nationalities, whose business it was to decide all petty disputes between traders, etc., and to get *rahdaris* (passports) for their clients when leaving Yarkand territory.

† Dosterkhan means literally the cloth on which the presents of fruits, sweetmeats, bowls of tea, etc., are spread.

First rode Takhta (the Chinese interpreter sent with us from the fort at Sugeyt by Ching Dolai), next to him rode the Chinese official sent by the Amban, then came our two selves followed by Ahmed Din, Mahammad Yakub, Mahammad Rahim, the Beg of Kargalik who had come out to meet us, the two head zemindars of Besherek, and our three shikaris mounted, and carrying our firearms; in all thirteen counting ourselves, behind whom came our fifty baggage ponies accompanied by the thirty men. Our route lay through fruit orchards, corn fields, and melon gardens teeming with fruit, grapes, peaches, apricots, greengages, nectarines, plums, pears, apples, all growing in the most reckless profusion; and I have no hesitation in saying that the fallen fruit alone which we saw lying on the ground, and which the people do not take the trouble to pick up, would almost make the fortune of a greengrocer in England.

We met a waggon on the road with one pony in the shafts and three mules as leaders. It was the first vehicle on wheels which we had seen since we parted with our tongas and ekkas at Baramulla on entering Kashmir early in April last, and as our ponies had *never* seen anything of the sort before, it was a long time before we could persuade them to go past them. At length we reached the outskirts of the town, where we came upon some Chinese soldiers working in their gardens round the fort, which is a large square building loopholed for musketry and with embrasures for guns.

It is here that all the grain, grass, and wood received as payment of taxes, etc., in kind is kept, and here also the military Amban has his quarters, and the barracks are also contained within the four walls of this unimposing structure.

Kargalik is a town of some importance. It contains about 2000 houses and a population of 15,000 souls. We rode through the bazaar, which is a long covered street running east and west, and covering at least a mile in length. We were in luck to find it was a market-day, so every shop and stall was occupied, particular parts of the bazaar being set apart for particular articles as in other cities in the East. Hats (Yarkandi caps), boots, cloaks, all had separate localities assigned to them, while the fruit-sellers had a whole street to themselves. In side streets, courtyards, and serais there was a market for live stock, the principal feature being the horses, of which there was a very good show of excessively useful-looking animals. The butchers also occupied a large area, and their stalls were full of carcases of beef and mutton. Large varieties of piece goods were shown, and Russian cloths and cotton prints seemed to predominate, while hardware in the shape of scissors, looking-glasses, knives, etc., took a front place on more than one stall. But the most noticeable article which was not only offered for sale, but found many ready purchasers amongst the fair sex, was *false hair*. All the women in this part of

Chinese Turkestan have their hair parted at the back of the head, falling on their shoulders in two long tresses sometimes plaited. On the head they wear big round fur caps in winter, and in summer small skull-caps, with a top like a bishop's mitre. Some of the ladies who are well stricken in years, and yet wish, like many of their Western sisters to appear young, stick these false tresses under their caps and think the object is attained.

The bakers' shops out-numbered the butchers', and showed three or four different sorts of bread—round balls, chupatties, twists, and a roll stuffed with meat, spices, and the ever-recurring onion (which pungent herb we can *never* get away from). These rolls were placed on wooden platters perforated with small holes, and then put over the mouth of a kettle containing boiling water covered over with another wooden lid. They are placed so high that the steam cooks them without wetting them. This is a very popular dish with the natives, to judge by the amount of people who partake of them, for these bakers' shops take the form of restaurants, there being tables and benches for those who choose to enter and sit down and take a meal, each man bringing his own chop-sticks, which are worn—in a case—in the cummerbund or girdle.

The people are very primitive, singularly honest, most civil and respectful, every man rising as we went past, and most of them salaaming with arms crossed in

front. The women are not veiled, although they all wear a long white veil down their backs, which some of them brought round to cover the face when we passed them. The children are all as stark naked as the day they were born, and never wear clothing until the age of five or six.

But what struck us most was the prevalence of goitres,* especially amongst the men, seventy-five per cent. of whom were afflicted with this scourge owing to the bad water. It was as prevalent and as bad as in the worst parts of Switzerland.

The women as a rule have very refined features and a high-bred look about them rarely to be seen in persons of their class. Some of the old women especially were very handsome, and yet I have not seen what is generally termed a pretty woman since I have been in the country.

We passed through one of the five gates of the town to get to the garden set apart for our camping ground. These gates are shut at 10 P.M. every night, after

* There is a legend attached to this disease which runs as follows: "A holy man of Khotan, called Sala Paikhumber, once went to Posgam on his camel. He slept in a cave, and on awaking in the morning found his camel gone. On inquiry, he found some of the people of Posgam had killed and eaten it; so in his anger he cursed them, and prayed to Allah that all the inhabitants of Posgam should have huge lumpy throats like the camel they had eaten." (Posgam is on the road to Yarkand, and goitres are more prevalent there than in any other village.)

which hour no one is allowed to walk in the streets except with a lantern.

We found carpets spread, divans prepared, and tables laid out with bowls of tea and milk, bread, sweetmeats, and every sort of fruit when we reached the garden in which we were to pitch our camp, and soon after our arrival we heard some cannon firing. This was the Amban Woorshing leaving his official residence in state to come and call upon us. An "avant courier," breathless with excitement, and brimming over with a sense of his own importance, came to announce the fact of the advent of the great man. We in the meantime were diving down to the bottom of our yak-dans to see if we could find any decent clothing to put on, in which to receive him.

He arrived in his carriage drawn by one mule. It was a very roomy-looking two-wheeled vehicle, with open front and roofed over something like the old waggons of the now obsolete "Land Transport Corps." His escort consisted of ten irregular soldiers, all natives of Turkestan, who form his body-guard; five of them had on long cone-shaped (fools' caps) fur hats, and the remaining five, extinguisher-shaped straw hats, over which fell an enormous tassel of reddish brown hair. They wore red and black sort of blouse or loose cloak, on the front and back of which were round pieces of white cloth emblazoned in Chinese characters with the name and rank of the Amban. They came unarmed,

but carried large heavily-thonged leathern whips over their shoulders "at the slope." These men always accompany the Amban whenever he goes out and act as outriders. He brought other six Chinamen with him who were his private servants. These men wore nothing on their heads, half of which were shaved from the forehead back, the rest being long hair gathered into a pigtail. They wore the usual short blue silk cloak and loose white pyjamas. After alighting from his carriage he advanced towards us, one of his attendants holding over his head a huge red umbrella, a second carrying his fan, and a third his pipe.

He shook hands warmly with us, and seating himself on the divan, took his fan and his pipe, and then the conversation commenced and was carried on as follows:—

First he spoke in Chinese to his interpreter, who rendered it in Turki to Takhta, who translated it into Persian to Ahmed Din, who explained it to us in English. We gave him the usual cup of tea which on all occasions is indispensable, and after a long conversation in which he displayed his utter ignorance of geography, by asking us if we had crossed the sea coming from India to this country, and various other equally startling questions, he took his departure. Soon after he had gone he sent two of his servants with presents for us—a large packet of tea, dried fish, a

copper dish full of hot meat and vegetables (the meat was dog), and some corn for the horses.

We returned his visit in the afternoon, and as we entered the courtyard of his residence the body-guard fired the cannon (as a salute for us) at a distance of about one yard from our horses, who, having never been accustomed to such deafening noises, remained mostly on their hind legs till the salute was over. Roche took a photograph of the Amban surrounded by his retinue, and Mrs. Amban, or rather Mrs. Woorshing, who was peeping out of a door behind her husband watching the performance, little knew she would appear in the picture. More guns when we left and more circus business on the part of our usually staid ponies, and we rode through the bazaar to our camp, the poorer by one musical box with which we presented the Amban before leaving, much to his delight.

August 1*st*.—Remained all day in Kargalik, and returned the visit of the Military Amban, who had been in the morning to visit us, accompanied by a mounted escort of his own cavalry. He is an officer of captain's rank only, and his command is not a very large one. I rode down to the fort by myself to return his visit, as Roche was busy in camp. The fort is very large and is undergoing extensive repairs. I admired all the joiner-work; the patterns of their woodwork and the neatness of execution were thoroughly Chinese, who as carpenters

can beat any other nation. We had one more interview with the Civil Amban, whom Roche photographed on horseback, and I had an opportunity of finding out something about his work, duties, establishment, etc.

It appears that he has an important officer immediately under his orders, to whom he turns for advice and help in emergencies, when two heads are better than one. He is the Kotwal of the town. Next in rank to this latter are two Ta-lao-jichs, or secretaries, who read all the papers and petitions to the Amban. Then came six Ssu-jichs or Munshis, the chief of whom acts as treasurer, and after them a whole army of scribes, all native Mahammadans, dressed in Chinese costume including the pigtail. The chief work of the Amban is to collect the revenue and enforce the payment of taxes. Small offenders only are brought before him for punishment, as he can award but small sentences, all graver criminals being judged by the Taotai of Kashgar, who has the power of life and death in his hands, although the extreme sentence of capital punishment is seldom carried out. It appeared to me that the prisoners had rather an easy time of it, as they are not incarcerated, at least not for minor offences, but are allowed to roam about at large begging in the streets, carrying a heavy bar of iron weighing about 100 pounds, which has two strong rings attached to it, one made fast round the prisoner's neck and the other round the right ankle; therefore when he moves

he has to carry this iron bar in his arms. All criminal cases are tried by the Amban in his own house, the Yâmen in which he holds his court. These Chinese are mostly Confucians, and we passed a large building which the natives call their "Idol House." Their doctrine is a simple one, being the worship of ancestors and filial piety. On the opposite side of the street was the tax house; here resides the collector of taxes, who sees to the impost on articles offered for sale in the bazaar being previously paid. Altitude, 4880 feet.

August 2nd.—Left Kargalik accompanied by the Beg, who was told off by the Amban to accompany us to Yarkand. We rode for miles through a highly cultivated country until we reached the Karajilga river, which like all the rivers in this country was not only in full flood, but had swept away the bridge. We held a council of war as to how we were to get the baggage across, for although we just managed to get over without swimming our horses, yet the baggage ponies would not be able to do so, and the things would all get wet. First we proposed to make a raft, but that plan had to be abandoned from the want of one essential, namely, wood. Then we tried to repair the bridge, but that proved impossible for the same reason. So at last we had to unload each pony, and the natives carried the baggage over on their heads, each man holding on to an unloaded man's hand to prevent being swept away; by

this means we got everything over dry, although it delayed us a very long time, and we were unable to get any further than the Tezuaf river that evening. That river also was in flood, and we made arrangements with two brothers, by name Mahammad Riaz and Hasan Bai (who are worth three lakhs and own a very large property in land), to supply us with camels to take the baggage across the next morning. We camped in the courtyard of their house at Karchi, they supplying us with milk, butter, eggs, and fruit, and refusing any payment whatever. Altitude, 4620 feet.

August 3rd.—The heat last night was quite unsupportable in our tents, the thermometer standing at 82°, but the noises we had to endure all night were even worse than the heat. First of all, the open windows of the harem were just over our tents, and at least half-a-dozen babies, to judge by the noise, screamed from 10 P.M. till 4 A.M. Two donkeys in the adjoining stable made night more hideous by trying to drown the cries of the children; horses neighed in response to the donkeys, dogs howled at both, and misguided cocks crowed at the moon. In addition to all this, a cow got loose and got foul of our tent-ropes, so three cats took it in turns to mew at the cow from under my bed. We were therefore truly glad when morning came, and vowed we would never camp in a farm-house courtyard again.

We crossed the river on camels,* which also carried the baggage over, the ponies swimming by themselves. It was a broad river and in some places pretty deep. We halted for lunch at a very picturesque spot by the side of a stream, where under the shade of a very large tree, something like a sycamore, we ate the most beautiful figs, peaches, nectarines, and melons, which were presented to us by a Hindu merchant from Quetta, who resides in this neighbourhood.

After a long and weary march we reached the banks of the Yarkand river, and camped in a field where we were nearly devoured by mosquitoes. Altitude, 4580 feet.

* These camels are quite different to the Syrian and Egyptian ones, having two humps, which are large loose flaps of flesh. They have woolly coats.

CHAPTER XXI.

Arrival at Yarkand—Brilliant reception—Visit the Amban—He returns the call—Rumours from the Pamirs—Revolt at Tashkend—Chinese soldiers for the Pamirs—Sayad Dost Mahammad Agha entertains us at a feast—Present of Horses—Presents of Fruit—Rumours of Russian advance in the Pamirs—Kashmir slaves—Our feast to the Merchants—The Aksakal and the Amban.

August 4th.—We rode seven miles down the side of the river to a sort of ferry, where we crossed over in an extraordinary looking boat, like a large box, big enough to carry passengers, baggage, ponies and all. The current was strong and the river broad, reminding me very much of the Nile, with its long low banks of mud, fringed here and there with trees, and the numerous sandbanks in the middle of the river completed the resemblance. On landing on the north side at Yang Anglik, we were met by the two Aksakals, Mahammad Yunnus and Mahammad Mustafa, Dost Mahammad, Sayad Aman, Haji Riaz, and a host of merchants and traders of Yarkand. They had brought some very smart horses for us to ride, knowing by experience how jaded our steeds would be. Roche mounted a fine chestnut of over fifteen hands, which is a big horse for

this country, and I rode a strong brown Badakshan cob of about the same height. We had seven miles to ride to the city, which we did at a hand canter. It was indeed a triumphal entry that we made into Yarkand. The Emperor of China himself could not have had greater honour paid him. All along the road—which lay through fields of maize, cotton, barley, wheat, and rice, orchards of fruit trees of all sorts, and gardens of melons,—our escort became augmented by horsemen who had ridden out to meet us, some coming half way, and some waiting just outside the city. All along the road every horseman we met dismounted, as a sign of respect, as we went by. At some of the houses we passed the owners stood at the doors awaiting our arrival, and offered bowls of milk, cups of tea, or trays of fruits to refresh us on our way. At last we rode through the suburbs and caught sight of the walls of the city, which resembles a huge fort.

Yarkand in ancient times was the capital of the country, and although no longer the metropolis, is still the most populous city, as well as the most wealthy in the whole of Kashgaria. The length of the old city is from north to south, but the walls—which are fortified and supported at intervals by buttress bastions, overtopped by loop-holed turrets—describe an irregular figure, with a circuit of about four miles. The old city is entered by five gates, namely, the Altun Derwaza or golden gate on the south, the Cáwugat Derwaza or melon gate on the

west, the Serabagh Derwaza or tree-garden gate on the north, the Masci Derwaza or jester's gate on the east, and the Khankah Derwaza or monastery gate on the south-east, and it was through this latter that we rode to Haji Rahim Jan's "suburban villa," a charming sort of house, half Chinese and half Indian bungalow, that had been placed at our disposal, and furnished by the Aksakals, who in their lavish generosity had prepared another much more pretentious palace for us in case we did not like Haji Rahim Jan's house. We dismounted at the latter first, and were so charmed with our prospective residence and its garden that we both instantly made up our minds to stay where we were, without waiting to see the other one; but as we thought the Aksakal's feelings would be hurt if we did not visit the other, we remounted our horses and rode off to the China Bagh, to view what turned out to be an enormous rambling palace, half in ruins, with a reception-hall big enough to hold the entire bungalow on which we had set our minds. This huge palace had also been furnished for us (furniture in Chinese Central Asia means *carpets* only), but as we could not possibly live in both, we felt we were not giving umbrage to anybody by selecting the less pretentious of the two houses as our residence.

On returning to our new home we were received at the outer gate of the courtyard by our landlord Haji Rahim Jan, who is a large landed proprietor in Yarkand. We wandered about the garden, and

Roche selected a shady spot on which to camp, as he preferred his tent to the house, which certainly was a little cramped for room. My bedroom consisted of four mud walls innocent of wall paper, or even plaster, two of which only went half-way up to the ceiling, so the room was airy enough, as windows are unknown in this country. My room was therefore open on two sides to the garden, as I soon discovered this first night that I slept there, by the presence of five cats, which resented the intrusion upon what had hitherto evidently been their sanctum. However, during the time I resided in that house I found means of lessening this feline family in the matter of numbers, until after a night or two I was able to sleep in comparative peace,—I say comparative, because the mosquitoes, although small in stature, were as large in appetite as in numbers, and my room being as open to the garden as if I had slept on one of the paths, these horrid little pests simply came in and out as their hunger urged them. Another pest, although not interfering with my sleep, were the bees, which certainly were not very pleasant companions to assist at my early morning toilet. They had turned the south wall of my bedroom into a hive, and what I thought to be old nail-holes in the mud wall when first I took possession of my room, turned out to be the dwelling-place of these highly interesting and busy little insects. Needless to say, I treated them with the utmost deference.

The morning after our arrival, we sent our cards (Chinese) by our interpreter to the Amban, informing him of our intention to do ourselves the honour of calling upon him, and at 5 P.M. behold us in all the glory of a clean suit of clothes, mounted on what novelists are pleased to call "richly caparisoned barbs," placed at our disposal by some of the wealthy merchants of this most hospitable city, careering through its filthy streets and filthier native bazaar, until we reached the Chinese quarter, which is certainly cleaner, the bazaar being of much more recent date, and the sanitary arrangements conducted on healthier principles than the open cesspools of the native quarter. The first thought that struck us both on riding through the native bazaar was, "why do not these people *all* die of cholera," for never was invitation more pressingly given to that fell scourge to make its appearance, and ravage a city, than is given daily here. And yet the death-rate of Yarkand will contrast favourably with that of many cities in more civilised countries, where sanitary engineering is a source of profit.

The Amban's residence was situated at the end of the Chinese quarter, and was built exactly in the same style as the Amban's house at Kargalik. We entered through large open courts, the walls of which were decorated with frescoes of most impossible looking animals of gigantic size, meant to represent Chinese dragons, and dismounted at the door of a pagoda, which

contained a sort of inner room with a passage right round it, the doors of which were only opened to us, we passing through this sort of box, while our retinue went round by the passage and joined us at the other side. The permission to enter this "holy of holies" was supposed to show that the Amban's tendencies were extra friendly, or that he had very exalted notions regarding our rank and position, and here the great man himself, accompanied by a host of retainers, met us and shook hands with us, Chinese fashion, grasping our two hands in both of his and pressing them against his breast. He led the way to the audience chamber, where tea was served as usual, in the little china covered cups, the Chinese always drinking their tea with the cover kept on the cup with the forefinger, and leaving just space enough between the lid and the lip of the cup to allow of the tea to come out. As for calling the beverage tea, it is a misnomer, for it is simply boiling water with about half a teaspoonful of tea-leaves at the bottom of the cup. Indeed, so few tea-leaves are there, that they do not even colour the water, beyond giving it an unwholesome-looking greenish tinge, and as for any taste or flavour about it, there is none. Our audience lasted about half an hour, during which time we made the whole of the conversation through the same channels as heretofore: English to Persian, Persian to Turki, Turki to Chinese, the Amban asking only one question, namely, where

were we going to, from Yarkand. Of course we had discussed the situation amongst ourselves in the morning, and had come to the conclusion, it was much better to be straightforward and tell the Amban point blank that we were going to the Pamirs, although the extravagant rumours, that had been flying about the bazaars all that morning and the previous day, relative to the position of affairs in that part of the country, had made us a little doubtful as to how he would receive the communication. The rumours to which I allude were all to do with one subject, namely, the advance of the Russians over the Chinese frontier of the Pamirs. There were all sorts of stories afloat about fights with Afghans, and fights with Chinese, and the occupation of this and that post by the Russians; wild tales of Cossack raids and flying Kirghiz, but as we did not believe any of them, it did not much matter. Then they said that a man had arrived from Tashkurgan with the news, that a body of Russian troops had marched into Aktash (which is in Chinese territory), had turned the Chinese soldiers out of the fort, and burnt it, and various other rumours of a like description. With all these "shaves" going about, we thought it highly probable that the Amban would *advise* us not to go, on the plea of not being able to procure provisions at Tashkurgan, through which Chinese military post we must of necessity pass, to get to the Pamirs. However, on our informing him of our intention to

proceed to Tashkurgan, and thence to the Pamirs, he said nothing, so I boldly asked him if he thought there would be any difficulty in our procuring supplies for ourselves, and forage for our horses there, and he replied in the negative. So thinking we had gone far enough for one day, we took our leave, he making a rather significant suggestion to Ahmed Din that he would like to see our passports.

The next day the Amban returned our visit, having previously sent his cards, which were even larger ones than those of his subordinate at Kargalik. He arrived in a two-wheeled carriage drawn by one mule, which seems to be the recognised mode of locomotion of a Chinese official in this part of the Celestial Empire. He was attended by his bodyguard, four private servants, all Chinese, and six interpreters. These interpreters are the chief men of the city and are the descendants of the Begs of former days, who indirectly administered the whole country. These men, although Yarkandis, all wore Chinese uniform, even to the pigtails. We went to the gateway of the courtyard to receive our guest, who seemed very friendly, and when we had him seated on our verandah, with his cup of tea and his queer little pipe (which took two men to look after, one holding it to his master's lips while the other one held a taper for him to light it with), he threw off all reserve and chatted away freely. He was much interested in some of our instruments that were lying on a

table, and insisted on being instructed in the use of the thermometer and aneroid, and the elementary principles of photography; but what our explanations, which we flattered ourselves were lucid enough in English, became, when sifted through the Persian, Turki and Chinese languages, we dared not contemplate. I should say by the look of astonishment on the Amban's face that by the time the meaning of such things as sensitive plates, maximum and minimum temperatures, atmospheric pressure, etc., were conveyed to him, they must have been very odd, to say the least of it. The only thing he seemed to comprehend was holding the bulb of a small thermometer in the palm of his hot hand, and seeing the mercury rise, that gave him such immense pleasure that we allowed him to take it away with him, which pleased him much. Not a word was said regarding the Pamirs, which we construed into a good omen for our contemplated expedition, and with mutual expressions of goodwill and many compliments we parted. No sooner had he departed than the Aksakal informed us that the Amban had sent for him that morning and ordered him to have four-hundred horses ready by next day to send to the Pamirs with grain, and by evening the cat was let out of the bag, by the arrival of the whole garrison from Kargalik, and the order for the despatch of the whole of the Yarkand troops, 250 cavalry, 750 infantry, and ten guns, to the Pamirs. This news confirmed us in the opinion that

there was some truth in these bazaar rumours after all, and, as it never rains but it pours, news of another disaster was rife in the city in the evening. This news was brought by a trader from Russian Central Asia, and was to the effect that a native rising had taken place at Tashkend, the Sart (Mahammadan) population of that city having been ordered by the Russian Lieutenant-Governor, owing to the prevalence of cholera in Russian Central Asia, not to eat or grow any more melons—their staple article of food. At these orders they rebelled and ended by stoning the Lieutenant-Governor, upon which the Russian troops were called out and fired upon the people, killing hundreds, and, driving them out of the city into the mountains, burnt all their houses.

How far this rumour is true it is impossible to say. Mullah Khair Mahammad, a native of Peshawar and one of the most respectable and well-to-do merchants of this city, told me the story himself, as the trader who brought the news from Russian Central Asia was a personal friend of his, and in his opinion a most reliable man. Personally, having lived some years in the East and knowing something of Orientals, I feel inclined to take the news very much *cum grano* until I see the ruins of the city with my own eyes;* for I hope to go

* In January, 1893, I visited Tashkend and found the rumour had been so far true, that the inhabitants, enraged at some rigorous sanitary orders issued by the Lieut.-Governor, which interfered with the sanctity of their dead in the cholera time, had thrown some

to Tashkend when I travel through Russian Central Asia, as I have received a communication from M. N. Petrovsky, the Russian Consul at Kashgar, informing me that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia has caused it to be made known that I have His Majesty's permission to cross the Russo-Chinese frontier and travel through Russian Central Asia, for which gracious concession I am most grateful.

This despatch of Chinese troops to Tashkurgan and the Pamirs, although promising us some stirring scenes, when we get there, is rather a nuisance for us. We cannot make up our minds whether to be off at once and try and keep in front of them, or wait until they have gone, and then follow them. It must be one of those two things, as there is but one route. The distance is a little over 200 miles. If we follow them we shall find no food for our horses on the way, as every bit of grass will have been eaten to the root, and that means carrying corn for our horses for twelve days to Tashkurgan, and four days on to the Pamirs. On the other hand, if we start before them we must be off at once, before the ponies have half-finished the grass in the field we hired for them, and before half their sore backs, etc., are healed (which number nineteen at this moment), before the broken yak-dans

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stones at him, and the troops had been called out and had been obliged to fire on the insurgents, but no one fled to the hills, nor were any houses burnt.

are repaired, in fact before anything is ready, and with the certainty of being overtaken by this Chinese force who, as they are, so to speak, marching against time to reach the scene of action without any delay, will do at least two marches a day to our one. Our object is not to come into contact with this force, at any rate until we have arrived upon the Pamirs, for a small caravan such as ours would be powerless to act, supposing a straggling band of these celestial warriors were to take a fancy to some of our horses to ride, to save their legs on the road, and a Chinese soldier is no respecter of persons or of property, and never heard of the word discipline, but spells plunder with the largest P he can find in his vocabulary. Any opposition on our part would bring us into collision with them, and would probably lead to bloodshed, which could have but one termination for our small force of scantily armed men. For these and other equally cogent reasons, our object is to keep clear of them as much as possible. So we have made up our minds to remain where we are until the troops have started; in fact had we decided otherwise we should have had to leave half our baggage behind, for not only have we nothing to pack it in until our yak-dans are mended, but until our ponies have recovered we should have no means of transport for more than two-thirds of the camp equipage. In addition to this, our men are shoeless, having worn out over one hundred pairs of chupplies on the march, and

we are having Tcharooks* made for them in the bazaar, which order is not yet completed, every man having been measured for his own to ensure a good fit, which is most essential on an expedition of this nature, where a lame man means one pony less for baggage. A good many of the horses also have to be re-shod, which is another important item.

August 9th.—To-day we were entertained at a feast by Sayad Dost Mahammad Agha, a British subject, at his house in the city, where about fifty of the leading merchants were invited to meet us. The entertainment was conducted on purely Asiatic lines. First of all we held a sort of durbar, all the merchants, many of them British subjects from the neighbourhood of Peshawar, Quetta, Shikarpur, etc., were presented to us; after that a chelmachi, or brass basin, and jug was brought to us in which to wash our hands before eating. We then sat down at a table by ourselves, the other guests sitting in the Asiastic posture of respect, viz. on their heels, not crossed-legged, but as if kneeling, on carpets spread under a verandah opening on to the garden close to our table. First to make their appearance on our table were ten plates of different sweetmeats and piles of peaches, nectarines, grapes and melons, after having

* A Tcharook is the half shoe half boot worn by the lower classes in Turkestan. It partakes of the Chinese shoe and the Indian (red) moccasin, with a felt top coming half-way up the leg.

done justice to which the meats were brought on. Twenty-nine dishes we counted this time, including bread, chuppaties, eggs, etc. Amongst the meats that we had to play with (for the host himself hovered round us to see that we tried a little of everything, and to refuse was to offend), was half a roasted sheep, a pair of fowls, kabobs, pillon with rice, meat balls stewed with cabbage, cutlets, and several dishes of weird-looking vegetables, which we did our best to avoid, when the eagle eye of our host was turned upon his other guests. For beverages we had china bowls of tea, ditto of good fresh milk, ditto of Nasha Allah, which I took to be cream until I discovered it was pounded sugar and the white of an egg whipped. The meats we ate with our fingers, in the absence of knives and forks, and when we had finished, soup was served in the same sort of china bowls as the tea, and we, thinking it was a fresh brew of that cheerful beverage, took several gulps before we found out our mistake. The feast concluded and our tobacco well under way, we were invited by Dost Mahammad to come into the garden to look at something he had to show us, and beheld two magnificent horses, one coal black, the other brown. After being led up and down to show their paces, our host placed the bridle of the black in my hand and that of the brown in Roche's, and begged our acceptance of them as a remembrance of this day, which, he said, marked "an epoch in the history of Yarkand," etc., etc.

Of course we refused to accept so munificent a gift, being absolutely unable in any way to return it, but at last our host appeared to be most offended at our refusal, and Ahmed Din informed us that we should mortally offend him if we persisted in our non-acceptance of these most handsome presents, and so with many pretty speeches on both sides we not only accepted the gifts but rode them home. We told Ahmed Din to find out from Dost Mahammad or the Aksakal, or some of our merchant friends, what we could possibly send him either from Calcutta or London in exchange, but he and they all declared a free gift was a free gift and required no *quid pro quo*, and that he would utterly decline to accept anything in return. At last after getting him down to our house and telling him that even at the risk of a rupture with him we would send the horses back unless he would tell us what he would like as a remembrance of us, he gave in and said he would accept whatever we chose to send him, so on those conditions we kept our presents.

According to custom in this country, an honoured guest of higher rank than his host always on parting from him throws over his shoulders a rich silken robe. We have therefore told Ahmed Din to procure two robes for us with which to encircle the portly frame of Dost Mahammad Agha on leaving. He is an enormously wealthy man and is quite the Rothschild of Yarkand.

To-day seemed pregnant with gifts and offerings. No

sooner had we returned to our house than Mahammad Azim Khan, a very nice fellow, and one of our greatest friends here, brought us two lovely pieces of old Chinese silk. Mullah Khair Mahammad also brought us two boxes of sugar-candy and two packets of Russian wax candles. Several others, whose names I cannot remember, brought gifts of different descriptions, amongst which were four splendid carpets of Khotan manufacture, two of them silken; two large pieces of Chinese silk, and two smaller ditto; four old china bowls, *Bleu du Roi*, with gold pattern; two teapots; and one merchant, who owns the finest fruit garden in Yarkand, presented us with four baskets of grapes (three sorts of Muscat, one purple like the black Hamburg), four baskets each holding one hundred peaches and nectarines and seventy melons, besides trays of beautiful golden figs, etc. How we are ever to repay the kindness of these good merchants I know not.

August 10*th*.—We are going to give a feast on a large scale to every merchant in Yarkand that has been presented to us, which means all those that we met at Sayad Dost Mahammad Agha's house. Our invitations have gone out, and Ahmed Din has been appointed by us to undertake the whole affair. In the meantime, while preparations are being made at our house, we thought it was time to visit the Amban again and find out what we could from him regarding the movements

of the Russian and Chinese troops on the Pamirs. Before leaving the house I sent for Rassoul, the cook, and asked him if he could make an ice (there being any amount of beautiful block ice here as cheap as dirt, as the Yarkand river freezes over every winter), and as he replied in the affirmative, I told him to use up some of the peaches and make peach ices for us for dinner.

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The Amban received us most graciously, and we asked him in the course of conversation if he had heard anything officially about the advance of the Russians on the Pamirs, as we, in the absence of Mr. Macartney, could hear nothing but bazaar rumours. He asked us what those rumours were, and we told him. He went so far as to say that he knew the Russians had occupied Rankul, and he believed had laid a line of telegraphic communication with Samarkand,* from that spot, which they claimed as belonging to them, and also he *believed* they had penetrated as far as Aktash, but had returned again to Rankul. To my inquiries as to the position of Aktash, the Amban replied it was a Chinese fort, but I don't think he had an idea on what part of the Pamirs it was situated. He was much more communicative on this occasion than he was at our former visit, and he gave us a great deal of valuable informa-

* Which supposition on the part of the Amban was entirely erroneous, there being no telegraphic communication in Russian Central Asia beyond Osh, in Ferghana.

tion about the country lying to the east of Yarkand and Kashgar, and rather pressed us to visit those parts. He told us that Urumtchi, the seat of Government of the "New Dominions," was a most interesting city, and that no Europeans had ever been there,* and he ended by trying to dissuade us from going into Russian Central Asia, and advised us to return to India by Pekin, *vid* Aksa, Urumtchi, etc., saying it would only take about six months.

All the Chinamen we have hitherto conversed with have a most peculiar sort of sing-song drawl when talking. The Amban, at Kargalik, especially hung upon his words as if he could not make up his mind what he wanted to say, and when the words did come they came with a sort of jerk at the end of a drawl.

This Amban in the course of conversation expressed a wish to be photographed by Roche, but could not at all understand how it was that he could not be put in possession of his likeness within half an hour of the photograph being taken, and did not at all seem to relish the idea of being kept waiting until the plate should be developed in Calcutta or London.

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On returning home to dinner, we were overjoyed to find that the one vegetable more dear to the English heart than any other, was cultivated in Yarkand, and

* There he was wrong.

that Rassoul had prepared for us a dish of boiled potatoes, but after our repast, when we looked forward to the peach ice for dessert, our hopes were rudely shattered by Subhana appearing, bearing in his hand our second teapot in which floated Rassoul's idea of a peach ice. What had once been ice had become warm water, and he had been most economical with the peaches.

August 12th.—"The Twelfth"—a date dear to the heart of every sportsman worthy of the name; a date that recalls to my mind happy days spent on the moors in the companionship of many a good sportsman now; alas, gone to join the "great majority!"

'Tis a far cry from Central Asia to the Highlands of Scotland, yet all my thoughts are there to-day, although I am thousands of miles from my native heather, on which by this time many a grouse lies dead. But thinking of it will not take me there and business must be attended to, for to-day, according to our friend Dost Mahammad, is "to mark another epoch in the social annals of Kashgaria." For it is the day of our feast given to the merchants of Yarkand.

While I was making arrangements with Ahmed Din in connection with the same, two woe-begone-looking individuals presented themselves before us, with a request that they might join our caravan to the Pamirs. They told us they were natives of Rajauri, in the

Jummu district (Kashmir), and had been soldiers in the army of the Maharaja of Kashmir, belonging to the Bigli (Lightning) Battalion. They were present at the battle of Chaproot (a place between Hunza and Gilgit) in 1889, when the Kashmir troops were defeated by the Kunjutis, who made a great number of prisoners, amongst whom were these two men. The Kunjutis sold all these prisoners as slaves, and these two were purchased by some Kirghiz in the Pamirs for three yambus each (486 Rs.). They said they had been well treated by their masters, who clothed and fed them well during the two years they were in slavery. Their duties were to herd sheep and goats, but they were never allowed to go on the hills alone, for fear of their attempting to escape. In April, this year (1892), Mr. Macartney reported to the Government of India that there were about 5000 prisoners, including Shighnanis, Wakhis, Chitralis, Gilgitis, Battis, Nagaris, Kunjutis, and a few Punjabis, in slavery in different parts of Turkestan, chiefly in the vicinity of Yarkand, and the Government, after consulting those officers most conversant with the question, came to the conclusion that these slaves should be ransomed, so Mr. Macartney was instructed by them to use his good offices with the Taotai, at Kashgar, with a view to getting these slaves released. Up to the present date about twelve have obtained their freedom; these two men, Shah Wali and Ilahi Bakhs, being among the

number. They had been to Kashgar to see Mr. Macartney, to obtain from him means of returning in safety to their native country, but finding him absent at Hunza, and hearing that two English sahibs were in Yarkand, they came to claim our protection, and asked us to help them back to Kashmir. So we agreed to take them to the Pamirs with us and we would see how we could send them on to Gilgit, from the Taghdumbash Pamir. I am afraid this generosity on our parts was not wholly disinterested, as it struck us both that they would come in useful to carry a dâk for us to Gilgit.

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Our feast is over and our guests have departed. I hope quite pleased. It went off very well. Sheep were roasted; rice, ghi and fruit purchased to feed from sixty to seventy merchants and traders. By 9 A.M. the guests began to assemble, carpets and numdahs being spread for them to sit upon in the garden. There tea was served, and they conversed for an hour with Ahmed Din, who did the preliminary honours, after which they all adjourned to the verandah, where Roche and I received them, shaking hands with each, and inquiring after their health. Dinner was then announced, the cloth being spread on the floor. They commenced with fruit and then all washed their hands, when pillao was served in large dishes, three persons to each dish. Then came meats, fowls and kabobs.

Hot tea was the drink, as it is the favourite beverage with all Yarkandis. Having finished their dinner, they all lifted up their hands and said a prayer, finishing with الا و اکبر "Allah-o-Akbar," God is great. After this, more conversation for about half an hour, and then, after shaking hands again with each guest, they all took their departure, with the exception of Dost Mahammad and two or three more of our particular friends, who remained to smoke a hukkah with Ahmed Din. The guests included many nationalities, namely, Yarkandis, Kashgaris, Khotanis, Bokharis, Shahr-i-sabs, Russian-Turkis, Afghans, Badakshanis, Kashmiris, and traders from Swat, Quetta, Peshin and Aksu. There was one Hindu present, and he had to look on, as he could not sit down and eat with Mahammadans.

August 13th.—Last night the Kargalik troops departed for the Pamirs, and to-day the Yarkandi brigade are under orders to march. All yesterday the streets and bazaars were blocked with cavalry soldiers getting their horses re-shod, and the town, as it was market-day as well, presented an unusually busy appearance. This morning our friend the Aksakal seemed rather low in his spirits, as it turned out that the Amban had sent for him yesterday evening and ordered him to be beaten with sticks in his (the Amban's) presence for not having furnished the requisite amount of baggage horses for the troops. The poor man was ordered to

produce 400 horses within twenty-four hours, which was an utter impossibility, every horse in the district (over 1000) having already been requisitioned by the Chinese to carry supplies to the troops at Tashkurgan, and there are absolutely very few left. So he could not collect more than 150.

However, the Amban (I think owing principally to our presence in the city, and knowing that the Aksakal was a personal friend of ours) determined to forego this most unnecessary castigation, and contented himself with abusing him roundly. These Ambans are invested with powers absolute, of which it is their custom to make very free use. As a general rule they are greedy, cruel, avaricious and corrupt, and do all their work and exercise their authority in a most arbitrary manner.

The two Ambans we have met are happy exceptions, this Amban of Yarkand being on the whole much liked. His predecessor, in 1889, was a man who would brook no disobedience of orders, as the following story will show. A case of murder having come before him, in which a woman had stabbed her husband with a knife, he issued an order that only knives with broken points were to be carried by the citizens of Yarkand, and that any person infringing these orders would be most severely punished, and the Aksakal of the new city was especially enjoined to see that the order was properly carried out. Some little time after

this, a man of most desperate character and a notorious thief, was caught red-handed in the act of breaking open a lock, preparatory to "burgling" the shop of the biggest merchant in the bazaar, and the Aksakal, knowing he had made an important capture, brought the thief into the Amban's presence for judgment, with the feeling that he had done something deserving of praise, and looking forward to being "complimented for his zeal by the Bench;" but imagine the dismay of this unfortunate official, when the knife—with which the lock had been picked—was produced, having on it a sharp point! The Amban, instead of complimenting him on his zeal, ordered a heavy wooden block to be placed round his neck, and in this most humiliating position he was made to walk for a whole day, from one end of the bazaar to the other, to show the people that he was punished for having neglected to carry out the Amban's instructions.*

All officials, high or low—and amongst the natives the Aksakal is the highest—are completely at the mercy of these Ambans, who can punish them and disgrace them in any way or at any time that they choose. The interpreters play an important part in all these transactions, and woe betide the wretched plaintiff in a "case," if he happens to be inimical to one of these gentry, for not only is he certain to lose

* This Aksakal, Salih Ju by name, was one of our guests at yesterday's entertainment. He is still Aksakal of New City.

his case, but to be punished as well, and for nothing. No evidence is taken down in writing, therefore no files are made out. The plaintiff, in the commencement of a suit, gives in a petition to have the case tried, enumerating his grievances and making his charge against the other party. A soldier is then despatched to bring the other party before the Amban and they both produce their witnesses. Sometimes a person wins his case at the very outset, by means of weeping copiously, and making a tremendous noise. Against the Amban's decision there is virtually no appeal. Sometimes the loser in a case journeys up to Kashgar, and lays the matter before the Taotai, imploring his interference and reversion of the Amban's judgment, but all the Taotai does, is to refer the matter back to the Amban, and to direct the petitioner to return, whereupon he gets most mercilessly flogged for his temerity in appealing.

The military Ambans are taken from a different class to the civil, who are mostly well born, the former all rising from the ranks, and they are in some cases more arrogant, cruel and corrupt than their civilian brethren in authority. They are accused by their detractors of drawing pay from the Imperial Treasury for a larger number of men than they could put in the field, especially in out of the way commands on the frontiers, where they are seldom or ever inspected by a superior officer. Thus an Amban will go on drawing

pay year after year, for 1000 men, when, as a matter of fact, he has never had more than 600 under his command, and pocketing the balance. If by chance a Chinese General were in an evil moment to come his way, and order a parade and inspection of the troops, he would press into his service, for the day, all the Chinese cooks and barbers out of the bazaar, and, dressing them up in the spare uniforms, would produce near about the number for which he was drawing pay.

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Before leaving Yarkand and its hospitable citizens and journeying through that portion of Kashgaria that lies between us and the Pamirs, I will give a short description of the Province, its geographical features, and also an account of those events that led to the overthrow of the Amir, and the re-occupation of the country by the Chinese.

CHAPTER XXII.

Yarkand—Description and History of—Geographical features—Events that led to overthrow of Yakub Beg, and re-occupation by the Chinese.

YARKAND is one of the most ancient cities in Eastern Turkestan, and the whilom capital of the country known now as Kashgaria, which at the time of the Arab conquest was called Túrán, or Mulki Tartar, but generally denominated Turkestan, and its different natural divisions were distinguished by appropriate appellations. Amongst these the province now known under the name of Kashgaria, was then called Kichik Bukara, or Little Bokhara, to distinguish it from Bokhara proper, to the westward, now one of Russia's Turkestan provinces. Dr. Bellew also tells us that "the Moghal invasion gave it the name of Moghalistan, and it was generally known by that name during the rule of the Chaghtáy Khans. Later on during the reign of that dynasty, however, the name of Kashgar, their capital, came into use to designate the plain country south of the Celestial Mountains, and has ever since been the one most commonly used to represent the great basin

of the Tarim river, although other names have been applied to it by foreigners. Thus by the Chinese conquerors it is called Tianshan-nan-lu, or "the way south of Tianshan," and by modern European geographers, Chinese Turkestan." *

Its northern boundary is formed by the watershed of the Celestial Mountains, while its southern boundary is formed by the northern slopes of the great Tibetan range of mountains, which is known by the names of Kuen-lun, or Blue Mountains, Karakoram, or Black Shale, and Mustagh, or Ice Mountains.

On the east lies the great desert of Gobi, whose sands divide it from China proper, and on the west it is bordered by the eastern slopes of the great Pamir Plateau. Its length, roughly speaking, is about 1000 miles, and breadth 500, and its area 243,000 square miles, the greater part of which is an uninhabited waste.

Forest trees are conspicuous by their absence, the vegetable kingdom being represented by poplar and willow trees, and along the river banks are thickets of brushwood, containing tamarisk, buckthorn, wild rose, juniper and *arbor-vitæ*.

Of animals there are the ibex and *Ovis Poli*, and a few antelope. They live up in the high regions, while below the snow-line, are bear and leopard. Wolves and wild dogs are ubiquitous, having no altitudinal limits to their wanderings. The Pamirs are full of both.

* Dr. Bellew's 'History of Kashgar.'

The only birds I have seen are the eagle, chough, kestrel and raven, which inhabit the snow-line; lower down are partridges, pigeons, larks, and stone-chats.

The whole country is drained by the Tarim river which flows east through the desert of Gobi. The rivers that feed it, and form what is called the Tarim Basin, are the Kashgar, the Yarkand, the Khutan and Aksu. It is on the plains and banks of these rivers that the fixed population reside and all the agricultural produce is grown. The plains are well irrigated by these several waters, the people knowing well how to make the best use of them. Most of the rivers are full of fish, but none of them are navigable.

In 1873 Kashgaria was governed by the Amir, Mahammad Yakub, Khan of Kashgar and Yarkand, formerly known by the title of Atalik Ghazi Yakub Beg, until Sayad Yakub Khan, the Yarkand Envoy, returned from Constantinople bearing with him the title of Khan, and new dignity of Amir, which was bestowed upon Mahammad Yakub during the time the English Mission, in charge of Mr. Forsyth (afterwards Sir T. D. Forsyth, K.C.S.I.), was at Kashgar, he having been sent there for the purpose of entering into a commercial treaty with His Highness the Amir, which treaty was concluded in 1874. After the departure of the British Mission, some Russian officers arrived at Kashgar, and at an audience with the Amir upbraided His Highness, on behalf of the Russian Government, for

having concluded this treaty with the British without previously consulting them, and declared that the Czar considered it in the light of covert hostility to himself, to whom the Amir had only a short time before sworn eternal friendship. The Amir replied that the English and the Russians were to him like his two eyes, and he looked upon both in the light of friends.

With this diplomatic reply the Russian officers were forced to be content, and they took their departure accordingly.

Some little time previous to these events, the Amir (then Atalik Ghazi Yakub Beg) had conquered the country round Urumtchi and taken the city and set up his government there, in the person of one Soyan Shai, a Tungani (Chinese Mahammadan). Soon after, however, a rebellion broke out in the conquered city and province, the Tungani joining the rebels who, after severe fighting, captured the city and murdered Soyan Shai, the Governor.

On receiving the news of the revolt and the death of the Governor, the Amir, who was at that time at Aksu, ordered his eldest son, the "Begbacha," to repair —with a large force—to the revolted province and recapture the city and quell the disturbances. In the meanwhile the Provinces of Gomti, Dawanchi, Sanju, Tokokluk, Kotabi, and Manas, had joined the insurrection. The Begbacha started from Aksu with a cavalry force of 3000 horses and four pieces of artillery, and arrived at Ushturfan by forced marches. The city of

Ushturfan was governed by one Hakim Khan Tora, the representative of the Amir, who came outside the town to meet the Begbacha with the news that Urumtchi had been retaken by the Amir's troops, and that law and order had been restored in the city, but that Dawanchi and other places in the immediate neighbourhood were still in open revolt. The Begbacha, therefore, continued his route and marched upon Dawanchi, where the Tungani rebels offered him battle, which he accepted, inflicting upon them a disastrous defeat. The rebels retreated into the city, where they entrenched themselves and stood a siege of two months, after which time the Begbacha's troops took the place by assault, using scaling-ladders, by means of which they climbed over the defences, and entering the city an indiscriminate slaughter took place. The Tungani rebels then sent 100 of their chief men to the Begbacha, suing for mercy, which he very considerately extended to them. He remained for twenty days in Dawanchi, making arrangements for the better administration of the city, and, leaving one of his higher officers there in charge of everything, departed himself for Urumtchi, where he was received with great cordiality by the Governor, Hakim Beg Tora. From there he marched on Gomti and laid siege to it, but it was not till three months afterwards that the city was reduced, after some tremendous hard fighting, in which the Begbacha had 750 men killed. The rebels, although

they made a brave resistance, were compelled to surrender, owing to the want of water, they having been eleven days without it, when the capitulation took place. So the Begbacha entered the city with his troops and took possession of it. After this the Begbacha, being determined to quell the insurrection thoroughly, marched on Manas, passing the Fort of Sanju on the way, where the people met him and begged his forgiveness for having rebelled, and swore eternal loyalty to the Amir for the future. Hardly had the vanguard of the Begbacha's army arrived at Tokokluk, when they perceived the Tunganis from Manas drawn up in battle array, ready to contest the road with him. The Begbacha attacked and defeated them, his soldiers pursuing them to the very walls of their city, which was one of the largest in the whole province. The rebels managed to make good their retreat, and closed the gates of the city in the face of the Begbacha's troops. This town was besieged for two months and a half, the rebels making a most gallant resistance, but on the death of their leader, a Tungani of great repute as a soldier, they lost heart, and one day opened the gates to the besiegers, giving in their unconditional submission to the Begbacha, who, with his usual kindness of heart, forgave them, and restored to them their former rights.

After arranging for the government of the city and province in such a manner as would meet the require-

ments of the people, without infringing upon the Sovereign rights or jeopardising the interests of his father the Amir, the Begbacha (or Beg, as he was now more generally termed) returned with his victorious troops to Ushturfan. On his arrival he heard the news that a large body of Tunganis were in full retreat upon the city, hotly pursued by a Chinese force.* On their

* The insurrection of the Mahammadan Chinese, called Tungáni, which broke out in the province of Kansúl in 1862, and which has in the space of a single decade shaken the stability of the ancient Government of the Celestial Empire to its very base, is, I believe, referable to that vague and ill-understood revival of Islam, of which so many instances have attracted attention in widely separated parts of the Mahammadan world during the (period 1860-75) last fifteen years: and may be counted as a result of the fanatic obstructiveness of the Faith to the advancing civilization and knowledge of the age (Romanoffski's Turkestan).

Be this as it may, the religious insurrection commencing at Sálár, or Hochow, in Kansáh, which was the principal seat of the Tungani sectarians, spread very rapidly over the subordinate governments of Zunghar and Kashgar, in which the Tungani . . . formed an important portion of the Imperial troops holding the several frontier towns. The cities of Zunghar, and the eastern cities of Kashgar, were the first to join in the rebellion, and almost simultaneously to overthrow the constituted authority by the massacre of the Buddhist-Chinese officials and residents, for the usurpation of the government under Mahammadan leaders of the Khoja, or priest class. So rapid were the successes of the fanatic insurgents, and so weak was the authority of the Chinese governors, that by the end of 1862 all the eastern cities of Kashgar . . . had thrown off the Chinese yoke and massacred . . . all the Buddhist officials, traders, and nomads.

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Following this (the deposition of Rustam Beg as Governor of Yarkand) an ill-feeling arose between the Mussalman Tungani and their Buddhist Khitay comrades in the garrison (at Yarkand). . . .

arrival at the suburbs of the city, the rebels sent messengers to the Beg praying an audience. The Beg

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Just at this time the (Chinese) Amban received secret tidings of the Tungani mutinies and massacres in the eastern cities . . . and after holding a council with his principal officers . . . it was decided to disarm all the Tungani troops. Some delay and hesitation occurred in carrying out this decision, and in the interim the intention was secretly conveyed to the Mah Dalai, who commanded the Tungani troops, by one of his spies, and he determined to be beforehand with the Amban, and set a strict watch upon his palace.

Shortly after, a second private council was held by the Amban, and the Mah Dalai, learning that the morrow had been fixed for the disarming of his men, immediately took his measures to frustrate the decision. Accordingly, that same night, he summoned a number of his officers . . . briefly informed them of the Amban's design against them, and told them to . . . at once inform their men of the part they were to act in the plan he had arranged to prevent its execution, and to seize the Government for themselves. Having done this, he left his quarters with fifty men, surprised the Buddhist Khitay guard sleeping outside the Fort gate, and cut the throats of all as they lay more or less drugged with opium.

By this time he was joined by about 400 others, who, according to instructions . . . set fire to the gates. . . . As the garrison was aroused by the alarm of fire, Tungani and Khitay came running out of their quarters together, but for very different purposes. The Tungani were all armed, and . . . each slew his Khitay comrade as he issued from his quarters. By this stratagem the Tungani killed 2000 of their Khitay brethren before the day dawned. . . . The Mah Dalai and his mutineers then entered the city . . . calling on the people to join the *Ghazat* and slay the infidel Khitay. . . . So rapid was the work of their destruction that by noon not a (Buddhist) Khitay was left alive in the city. . . . Thus on the 10th August, 1863, perished some 7000 Khitay souls. . . . On receipt of this intelligence, the cities of Khutan, Yangi-Hissar, Kashgar and Aksu, all rose simultaneously against the Khitay, and within six weeks had massacred them all of both sexes and every age. (Extracts from Dr. Bellew's 'History of Kashgaria.')

consented to receive a deputation, who in due time arrived and gave in their submission. Again did the Beg exercise his clemency, and, having obtained the Amir's full pardon for the rebels, made arrangement to colonise a portion of the province of Urumtchi with them.

The Amir now issued a proclamation to the Tungani rebels reminding them that they were all of the same true faith as himself, and in pardoning them said he felt sure they would atone for their fault by joining his army and making common cause against the Chinese infidels. All this occurred in 1875.

When all was quiet, the Beg returned with his troops to Kashgar.

About eighteen months after this the Amir received news from Urumtchi that a Chinese army had arrived there. He immediately gave orders for a force of 700 men to be sent to Dawanchi, half-way between Ushturfan and Urumtchi to hold the fort there. The Chinese army meanwhile advanced, and attacking the fort, took it and made prisoners of all of the troops that were not killed in the defence, stores, guns, ammunition, and all falling into their hands. When the Amir heard this disastrous news he started from Kashgar, arriving at Karashahr with about 8000 men. Here he held a council of war with the chiefs of his army, and it was decided to give battle to the Chinese at a place named Oshaktak, two marches from Karashahr, on the

road to Ushturfan, this place being selected as the most suitable from a strategic point of view. Before risking all on this projected battle, it was deemed necessary to make sure of the loyalty of the Tungani troops, and with that view the Amir ordered all the Tungani chiefs to meet him in council. These swore that they and their men would fight in the Amir's cause to the death. The Chinese in the meantime were making all preparations to encounter the troops of the Amir, their head-quarters being at Ushturfan, which city they had captured after their success at the Dawanchi Fort. While both parties were preparing for the fray, one of the Amir's private servants, who had been bribed by Niaz Hakim,* Governor of Khotan, with a large sum of money, paid in golden tillahs, to put the Amir to death, managed to insert some deadly poison into his tea, and thus died the Amir Mahammad Yakub by the cowardly hand of an assassin. Soon after the death of the Amir, a council was held at which it was decided that the Begbacha should succeed his father, he being the eldest son, and a communication was made to him at Kashgar, where he happened to be at the time, to that effect. His younger brother Hak-kuki Beg was

* Niaz Hakim was formerly an ordinary servant of the Amir's, but gained such high favour that he speedily rose to be Governor of Khotan. He intrigued to put Hakim Khan Tora on the throne in the place of the Amir, and by a bribe of several thousand tillahs persuaded one of the Amir's own servants to administer poison to him, and thus brought about his death.

appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army. After the corpse of the late Amir had been sent to Kashgar, a council of war was held, presided over by the new Commander-in-chief, Hak-kuki Beg, at which it was decided to give battle to the Chinese at once. But a new surprise was in store for the Amir's troops, for on the morrow the new commander, Hak-kuki Beg, instead of being in readiness to lead his troops against the Chinese, was found to have absconded with the whole of the treasure, and accompanied by 500 men. By this nefarious act the officers of the Amir's army were put in the most awkward position, having absolutely no money wherewith to pay their men, so they sent a force after Hak-kuki to arrest him, when he not only evaded his pursuers, but proceeded to Aksu, and, breaking into the treasury there, took possession of all the money. His intention was to go to Kashgar, and by treachery to get his brother into his power, cut his head off and assume the reins of Government himself as Amir. The newly elected Amir, however, got wind of his brother's amiable intentions with regard to himself, and sent out some troops to meet him; these fell in with Hak-kuki and his escort and attacked them on the road, near Maralbashi, and defeated them with much slaughter, killing Hak-kuki himself, and repossessing themselves of all the moneys and treasures with which he had absconded. These they took back to Kashgar and

restored to the new Amir, their rightful owner. In the meantime the bulk of the late Amir's army that had been left at Karashahr in a state of semi-confusion—by the defection of their pusillanimous commander-in-chief—gave up all idea of attacking the Chinese, and beat a hasty retreat upon Aksu, where a council of war was convened by the arch-traitor, Niaz Hakim, who, now taking the lead in all matters, presided over it himself. At this meeting at which were present all the principal officers of the army, Niaz boldly proposed the dethronement of the Beg, now Amir by right of succession, and the election of Hakim Khan Tora, Governor of Ushturfan, as Amir of Kashgaria, in his stead. This proposal was accepted by the assembled chiefs, and a proclamation to that effect was promulgated all through the country.

Niaz Hakim having now effected his vile purpose, of making away with the Amir, and having dethroned his son, made known to his comrades his intention of proceeding at once to his seat of government at Khotan and of collecting there all available troops with which to march on Kashgar and seize the Amir, whom he intended to behead.

When news was brought to Kashgar of the proclamation, and of the treachery of Niaz, the young Amir assembled all the troops that had remained faithful to him and, with a small force of 3000 cavalry, sallied forth towards Aksu, determined to try conclusions with

the usurper, Hakim Khan Tora, and not to surrender his throne without striking one blow in its defence. The usurper, who had with him a force of 7000 cavalry, marched out of Aksu and met the Amir's force at a place called Yaidoo. Here, after some severe fighting, he got worsted and was forced to retreat upon Aksu, where the Amir pursued him, ultimately capturing the city. Ten days later the Amir returned with his little army to Kashgar, where he was joined by another 2500 men, with which augmented force he marched on Khotan, determined to punish the traitor Niaz. The contending forces met outside the suburbs of Khotan, when again fortune smiled upon the Amir's arms and he routed the rebels with great loss, the traitor Niaz unfortunately making good his escape to Kola, near Karashahr, where he threw in his lot with the Chinese, who by this time were marching on Aksu. This city they entered without any fighting, the people—in the absence of the troops who were all at Khotan—opening the gates to the enemy, and receiving them with open arms.

The Amir, on hearing that Aksu had fallen into the hands of the Chinese, left Khotan and hurried back to Yarkand, where a council was held, at which it was first decided to march on Aksu and arrest the further advance of the Chinese army, but on hearing that they numbered 40,000 men, his chiefs prevailed upon the Amir to give up all idea of fighting such an overwhelmingly superior force, and counselled him to fly to

India, taking with him all his treasure. Although brave enough in the hour of victory, the Amir was found wanting in the moral courage to face a reverse, and accepting the pusillanimous counsels of his advisers, agreed to escape from Yarkand the following day, and to make his way to Ladak, eighty of his faithful (?) Afghans agreeing to escort him thither. The next morning saw him with his horses laden with treasure, on the banks of the Yarkand river, waiting for his Afghan guides and escort. But he waited in vain. The Afghans never put in an appearance, so, disappointed at their defection, and not knowing now which way to turn for safety, he determined to return to Yarkand. But he had by his flight cut the ground from under his own feet. The Yarkandis knowing he had attempted to escape, and despising him as much for the intention as for his inability to carry it out, met him with dark and sinister looks, which made it at once evident to the unfortunate prince that his short tenure of rule had come to an ignominious termination. When the news of his contemplated flight reached Kashgar, Mahammad Zia, one of his most trusted officers, who was in charge of his palace and treasure, hearing that his master had gone, thought it was time he went also, and confided the same to his friend Khai Dalai, the Tungani officer in command of the force that had taken the new city. These two worthies laid their heads together, and it was arranged that while Mahammad

Zia escaped to Andijan with all the Amir's money, valuables, and treasure, Khai Dalai should proclaim himself Governor of Kashgaria.

It having been decided that it was safer for the Amir to leave Yarkand, he proceeded to Kashgar only to find the gates of the new city closed in his face, the Tunganis having, during his absence, taken possession of it. The Amir being unable to enter the city, where his palace was and all his household goods, besides a great deal of treasure that he was unable to convey with him, on his contemplated flight to India, returned to the old city and took up his residence there, still accompanied by a small force, with which he made sorties and harassed Khai Dolai not a little.

This fighting went on continually, until one fine day the Amir was nowhere to be found, as he had made good his escape to Andijan, taking everything with him. This act on his part was construed into a voluntary surrender of power, and the Chinese took advantage of the fuss and confusion consequent on his flight, to march on Kashgar. Khai Dalai being a converted Buddhist, or a perverted Mahammadan, elected to join his own countrymen, the Chinese, and ended by opening the gates of the new city to the Chinese and giving them a cordial reception in the name of the people. The Chinese force was divided into two army corps, the first under the Joya, marching to Yarkand, the second to Kashgar. It was the second army corps that took

possession of the new city of Kashgar, while the Joya, or Commander-in-Chief of the whole force, captured Yarkand without firing a shot.

Mahammad Zia, who absconded with the Amir's jewels and treasure from Kashgar, was captured on the way to Andijan and beheaded.

On the 14th Zilhaj 1294, Hijiri (Mahammadan year), the Chinese Joya held a Durbar at Yarkand, and addressed the Yarkandi chief merchants and citizens (for the soldiers were all away). He congratulated them upon being freed from the yoke of the Amir's government, alluded to the Amir's sons as traitors to their country, and finally concluded his address by again proclaiming Chinese rule and Government. All this was accepted by his hearers without a murmur.

Thus ended the rule of the Amir of Kashgaria, and thus recommenced a new era under the Government of the Celestial Empire.*

The deposed Amir had fled to Tashkend, in Russian Turkestan, where he resides at the present time.

* The foregoing synopsis of events, that occurred from the year 1874 up to the time of the Amir's death, and the subsequent changes that took place until the final overthrow of Mahammadan rule and the re-establishment of Chinese Government, was related to me by Haji Niaz, one of the Amir's cavalry commanders, who served in all the actions under the Begbacha, to whom he always remained true. He said he did his best to try and persuade the young Amir to remain and fight it out, and when, eventually he fled, Haji Niaz broke his sword over his knee and surrendered himself to the Chinese, who treated him with much deference.

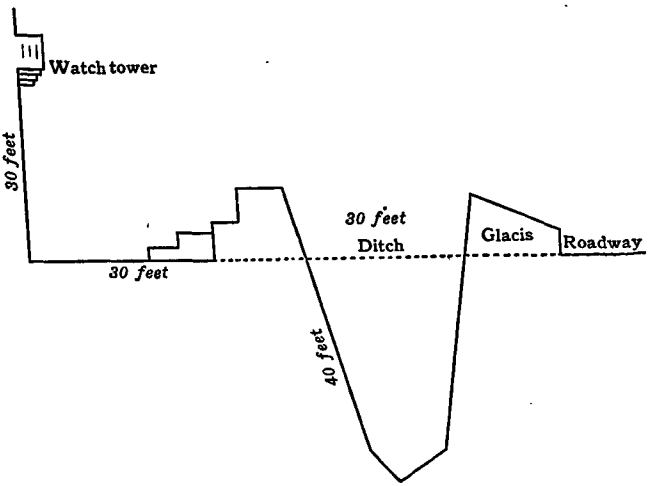
CHAPTER XXIII.

Modern Fortification of Yarkand—The New City—Manners and Customs of the People—Trade, Agriculture, Marriage, and Divorce.

YANGHI SHAHR (or the New City) stands at about a quarter of a mile from Kuhna Shahr (the Old City) to the west of it. The Chinese call it "Mangshin," or the Fort. It is entered from the east by a double gate, the inner one being built of solid masonry, 46 feet thick, and over a drawbridge which spans a ditch 30 feet wide and 40 feet deep. In fact, the engineer officers who planned this Fort seem to have built a great part of it according to a uniform plan of dimensions; for the inner wall of the Fort is 30 feet high, and is 30 feet distant from the outer wall, which is about 12 feet high. This wall, again, is about 30 feet from the top of the glacis, 30 feet being the breadth of the ditch, the sides of which are very steep, the inside pitch of the glacis being very nearly perpendicular. The four walls of the Fort, which is square, are about 1000 yards long, each with watch-towers every 100 yards, capable of bringing

a flanking fire on to the face of the main wall. There is a guard posted in each of these watch-towers every night.

This Eastern gate of the new city faces the Altun Derwaza, or Golden Gate of the Kuhna Shahr, and is



SECTION OF FORTIFICATION OF YANGHI SHAHR, YARKAND, SHOWING FLANKING TURRETS OR WATCH-TOWERS, INNER AND OUTER WALLS, DITCH AND GLACIS.*

connected with it by a roofed bazaar called the China bazaar. It contains a great number of cooks' shops and others, behind which are situated the cattle and horse markets and the gallows. All these stalls in the China bazaar are occupied — as the name indicates — by

* When Major Roche asked permission to take a photograph of the fortification, the request was politely refused.

Chinamen, such as gold and silversmiths, Chinese cup-sellers, dealers in tobacco, fruit, second-hand clothes, Chinese combs, silks, whips, opium pipes and glass globes for the same, looking-glasses, Chinese puzzles, playing cards, enormously broad-brimmed straw hats, and umbrellas; but the shoemakers predominate.

Here are to be seen beggars in every state of disease; the blind, the lame, and the halt; those whining pests that infest almost every city all over the East.

The fort has a separate bazaar of its own, and it may fairly be considered the principal street of Yarkand, it contains 320 shops, *as seen on market day,** which are occupied principally by dealers in piece goods, cloths and cotton prints from Russia, and muslins and printed handkerchiefs from Manchester. No firearms or swords or any lethal weapons are permitted to be offered for sale in the bazaar.

* On a non-market day many, perhaps one-third, of these shops are closed, only to be re-opened at the expiration of seven days, as the markets are held weekly, not only in the city, but in the whole of the Yarkand district, and always on the same day. In the small country towns and villages that boast a bazaar, this custom is most misleading to the traveller, who if he happens to ride through one of these small towns on a market-day, is much struck with the exceedingly business-like aspect of the place and the density and activity of its population; but if he were to remain there till the following day he would awake in the morning to find his illusion dispelled, for instead of a struggling, jostling crowd of purchasers, and an eager busy lot of vendors in the bazaars, he would walk through a town resembling a city of the dead; through lonely streets, past empty stalls and silent forges, fruit-stalls inno-

The military element, all told, number something under 2000 men *on paper*, most of whom are cavalry soldiers without horses. A great number of these, in quiet times before the Pamirs had become a bone of contention, used to be absent on duty in the district or were on detachment on the frontier outposts, in which case the wives and families of the soldiers always remain behind in the fort.

Almost every Chinaman in Yarkand, soldier or civilian, takes unto himself a temporary wife, dispensing entirely with the services of the clergy, as being superfluous, and most of the high officials also give way to the same amiable weakness, their mistresses being in almost all cases natives of Khotan, which city enjoys the unenviable distinction of supplying every large city in Turkestan with courtesans.

When a Chinaman is called back to his own home in China proper, or a Chinese soldier has served his time in Turkestan and has to return to his native city of Pekin or Shanghaj, he either leaves his temporary wife

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cent of peach or melon, and deserted cook-shops. But if, on the other hand, he had journeyed on eight or ten miles to the next market town, he would have found the same jostling crowd and busy multitude buying and selling with the same commercial activity as the day previous. Not only has each town its own particular market-day, but they are arranged geographically so to speak, *e.g.* if Monday is market-day at Sanju, Tuesday is at Kostagh, Wednesday at Oi Taghragk, Thursday at Borah, and Friday at Kargalik, and so on within a certain radius to suit the convenience of all commercially concerned.

behind to shift for herself, or he sells her to a friend. If he has a family he takes the boys with him—if he can afford it—failing that, the sons are left alone and unprotected to fight the battle of life, while in the case of daughters, he sells them to one of his former companions for a trifling sum.

The natives, although all Mahammadans, have a strong predilection for the Chinese, and seem to like their manners and customs, and never seem to resent this behaviour to their womankind, their own manners, customs, and morals (?) being of the very loosest description.

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Subjoined are the ordinary names of men and women in Yarkand. I have selected the commonest.

Men's names.	*Women's names.*
Tukhta Akhwand.	Haji Khan.
Niaz Haji.	Fatima Khan.
Musa Akhwand.	Laili Khan.
Sadir Bai.	Jamsta Khan.
Tursam Bai.	Himian Khan.
Saber Bai.	Odi Khan.

The old city and suburbs contain a population of some 60,000 souls, and about 12,000 houses, inclusive of mosques, idol houses, serais, and so-called colleges, which answer to our grammar schools, all but one which is more worthy of the name of college. The new city contains about 400 houses, and its population does not exceed 2000. One peculiar feature of Yarkand is

its tanks, 120 of which foul receptacles for stagnant water, putrid matter, and cesspool drainage, exist within the walls. They are filled at intervals from streams from the outside, some two or three miles from the city, from whence the water is led to these tanks by means of small canals. The want of water is one of the greatest drawbacks to Yarkand; for, as a strategic point, it is useless, having no means of supplying its garrison with water in the event of a siege.

The principal industry is the leather trade, especially in boots and shoes, saddlery and harness, caps and sheepskin coats. These are about the only articles exported.

Agriculture.—The following are the chief field crops:—

Wheat.—Sown in two seasons, August and September, and March and April. The Autumn sowing remains in the ground, and comes up in March, about the time of the Spring sowing. Both crops ripen together, and are cut in July. The Winter seed returns twelve to fourteen fold, and the Spring only about half.

Barley.—Sown in spring, returns about ten-fold.

Maize.—Sown in April, and cut in September, returns about sixty-fold. The corn and stalks are used for ponies and cattle in winter.

Rice.—Sown in April, and cut in September and October, returns six to eight fold. The seed is husked on the banks of the canals by water-mills, called

"Sucana." A tax from 8 to 10 rupees per annum is charged on every mill; and a water-mill for grinding wheat pays a tax of from 10 to 15 rupees per annum.

Lucerne.—Sown in August and September; comes up in March and April; is cut three times in six months, one sowing lasts three years, after which the roots decay. It is grown with barley, otherwise it will not thrive.

Flax.—Grown extensively in April and May, and cut in September and October. The Yarkandis eat it in place of ghi. In cooking, nothing but flax oil is used.

Hemp is extensively cultivated in Kargalik and Yangi Hissar, and in the last few years in Yarkand itself. The resin is collected in October, and packed in bags of raw goat skins. When ripe, it is cut and dried, then beaten with a stick; the leaves are collected and powdered, they contain a sort of oily matter. The powder is passed through a fine cloth, which makes *charas* of the first class. The remainder is passed through a coarser cloth, making second-class *charas;* it then sells from 3 annas to 1 rupee 8 annas per 3 lbs., the price varying according to the quality. It is all exported to India, exportation into Russian Turkestan being prohibited. The average cost of a pony-load, 3 maunds (240 lbs.); at Yarkand is 50 Rs., which sells in Ladak at 90 to 100 Rs., and in India from 125 to 150 Rs. The trade in *charas* is a gamble, the fluctuations in price being great. The fact is, it goes bad after a year, and becomes useless, and the traders are naturally anxious to dispose

of it within the season, at whatever price they can get. Hundreds of big traders have been ruined at it. Three lakhs worth of *charas* is annually exported to Leh in Ladak, but its consumption has of late diminished, as *ghanja* from Nepaul is rapidly taking its place. At one time the Punjab Government contemplated imposing a very high tax on it, and although the opinions of a great majority of the district officers were in favour of imposing this tax, no decisive step seems to have been taken as yet.

Cotton is mostly cultivated in the neighbourhood of Yarkand and Kargalik down to Sanju. A great quantity is also grown in the Khotan and Ushturfan districts. The seed is sown in April and May, and it flowers in July. The pods continue forming until the end of October. They are gathered three times in the season. It is manufactured locally into a coarse sort of cloth called *khan*, which is used by the natives in making cloaks, and large quantities of it are exported to Russian Turkestan.

Garden and orchard produce include potatoes, cabbage, turnips, radishes, carrots, lettuces, peas, beans, pulse, water-melons, cucumbers, pumpkins, and gourds.

Fruits.—Grapes, melons, pears, apples, plums, apricots, nectarines, peaches, quinces, figs, pomegranates, mulberries, walnuts.

The Chinese make a kind of wine from the grapes. All these fruits are of the very best quality

Betrothal, Marriage, Divorce.—Betrothals, especially amongst the better classes, are arranged while both parties are in their infancy, but the marriage does not take place until they are of a proper age, when the young people make their own arrangements. The marriage-day ceremonies are much the same as those in India, the bridegroom going with his friends and relations to the bride's house, where the Nikah is read by a Mullah, who receives a sum of money and a dish of pillao for his services; sometimes if the parents of the contracting parties are rich folk, he receives in addition a piece of muslin for his turban. The wedding festivities are prolonged for four or five days, or more, also according to the means of the parties concerned. Marriageable women in Yarkand are classified under three heads, viz. (1) Kiz, or the maiden; (2) Chankan, or the woman who has been only once married, and has no children; (3) Jowan, or a woman who has been married and has had children. Neither of these two latter need necessarily be widows; on the contrary, it is odds on their being divorcées.

One of the first things done is the sending by the parents of the bridegroom to the house of the bride's parents a large bag containing a razai (quilt), a hat, coat, trousers, comb, mirror, and a chapkan (long cloak), shahi (of silk), and one piece of tawar, or Chinese silk, for the bride's dress; in cases of wealthy people, this latter costing sometimes over 1000 rupees. The

zemindars, or farmer class, go to work in a much simpler and less extravagant way. The day being fixed, all the friends and relatives assemble, when some bread, four yards of long cloth or muslin are placed before the Mullah, who reads the Nikah. When that is over, the bread is broken and given to the bride and bridegroom and the other guests present, as is also a piece of the long cloth or muslin. Then a feast is prepared at the bride's house, where some sheep and some rice have already been sent by the parents of the bridegroom.

Amongst the poor classes, the ceremonials are even simpler. The bridegroom's parents send a cloak and trousers of red cotton, a hat and a pair of shoes, with leathern stockings; the Mullah is called in, a cup of salt water and some bread are placed before him, and he reads the Nikah, when the bride's father or guardian takes a piece of bread, dips it into the salt water, and puts it into the mouths of both bride and bridegroom, and the Mullah receives a tanga, $3\frac{1}{2}d.$, for his services.

But the matrimonial laws are not held at all sacred, and the knot is very easy to untie. The people, though Sunni Mahammadans, and though prevented by the Shariat from entering into the Mata system of marriage, which is practised by the Shia Mahammadans, very often divorce their wives for no reason whatever, except that they want to take another one. Mata is a form of marriage, for a stated period with the conditions attached, that the husband pays so much money on the

termination of the contract. It is indirectly practised in Yarkand, the husband divorcing his wife for some trifling matter, that in no way lowers her dignity or moral position, she receiving so much money and clothing. It is impossible to find in Yarkand a man or a woman who has only *once* been married in his or her lifetime, the majority of the women having had as many as thirty to forty husbands in their lifetime, and the men as many wives, but never more than four at the same time, even the most respectable and orthodox having had from eight to twelve wives. Amongst the higher classes, parents employ professional "wife-finders," that is to say, women whose sole business in life is to mark down all the prettiest girls in the city or neighbourhood, and to report the same to any one wishing to find a good-looking girl for their son to marry, as beauty in Yarkand goes before worth. When the quarry is marked down, the parents take the first opportunity of a personal inspection of the girl, and if she meets with their approval, the professional's services are again called in to bring the young people together, for in Yarkand, the Mahammadan women do not veil as they are forced to do in other Moslem countries.

If the young man is smitten, then a formal request is made by his parents for the hand of the young lady in marriage, and if she and her parents are both agreeable, an understanding is arrived at, and a

matrimonial alliance is the result. A good-looking girl, no matter how lowly born, has an infinitely better chance of securing a rich husband than a more aristocratically-bred young lady; and a wealthy suitor, no matter how well stricken in years, can obtain the hand of any girl in marriage after a few minutes' conversation with her parents, who name their own price, according to the eagerness displayed by her senile adorer. Thus it often happens, that a young and lovely girl, in the first bloom of maidenhood, is sold by her parents to some sensual old wretch, with one foot in the grave, and as the other foot is not long in following, she becomes one of the most valuable prizes known in the matrimonial market, namely a young, lovely, and rich widow. Then her turn comes; she is endowed with her late husband's worldly goods, plus her own good looks, with which two important factors she embarks on her career of polyandry, for there is no other name for it.

A Yarkandi would be most deeply offended were one to tell him that, not only do the men of his country practise polygamy to an extent absolutely unknown in any other Mahammadan country, but that his women practise polyandry to a greater extent than the Buddhists of Western Tibet, where it has been a recognised custom for generations. But that is what it amounts to. This young and interesting widow marries the first man that takes her fancy; as

soon as she gets tired of him, she can get a divorce for the modest sum of threepence-halfpenny. So she goes on marrying sometimes several husbands within a twelvemonth, from all of whom she can get a divorce on the flimsiest of pretexts. Even the birth of children does not seem to make the matrimonial tie any firmer, for it frequently happens that a woman in throwing up her husband and taking another, leaves her children behind as well.

Parents seem to have as little affection for their sons and daughters as the children have love or respect for their fathers and mothers; consequently, as soon as the sons are able to take care of themselves, they never look upon their father's house as their home. In fact, such words as "home," or "family ties," are unknown to these people, who are not capable of forming any legitimate attachments, although deeply imbued with amatory proclivities of an illicit order.

The pardah system is not so rigorously practised as in other Mahammadan countries, as one seldom sees a woman veiled in Yarkand. The women of the better class are not allowed to walk about in the daytime, but they have perfect liberty to go about in the evening, attended by a maid-servant, and they often make parties to go to a garden, where they feast and dance, as every woman is able to dance, and most of them can sing and play on an instrument called a *dotar*, a sort of mandoline with two wire

strings. The prevalence of the use of this instrument can best be judged from the fact that the children have toys made in the shape of this mandoline. Every Friday, parties are made up to go and make merry in one of these gardens, when every man takes the female members of his family to the entertainment.

The Yarkandis are excessively polite and ceremonious, and the forms of etiquette are rigidly observed on the most trivial occasions. When taking their meals, they stop about every third minute, when every one invites the other to commence eating again. One man will extend his hand, and another will do the same, then with a little inclination of the head, they all accept the invitation, and recommence eating—with their fingers, moving all the best dishes one to another with the most punctilious politeness. After eating, when the hukkah is brought in and presented first to the principal guest, he rises and, making a low bow, says, "Ashk allah!" God's love. (Ishk is the proper word for love, but the Yarkandis pronounce it Ashk.) All men and women either smoke tobacco or eat it, but seldom take it in the form of snuff. Most of their quarrels, however serious, are amicably settled, by one party offering a hukkah to the other, which amounts to an apology.

Charas smoking also prevails to a demoralizing extent; even some women practise it. The more refined people take it in the form of sweet cakes,

when it is called *maadjoon*. Begs, Aksakals, and other officials, who come into constant contact with the Chinese, have taken to smoking opium.

Inferiors always stand up before their superiors in a submissive attitude, with head bowed, and arms crossed low in front, and one of the most respectful salutations is the stroking of the beard, either real or imaginary, more frequently the latter, as they are not, generally speaking, a hirsute race of people.

With all their faults, these Yarkandis are a kindly and most hospitable race.

CHAPTER XXIV.

More Chinese Troops leave for the Pamirs — Departure from Yarkand—Small-pox in the Camp—Another disturbed Night —An unfortunate Mistake—March to Yakarik—The Desert of Shaitan Kum—Pleasures of following a Chinese Force— The Black Pass—A bad Precipice.

August 16*th*.—More troops leaving to-day for Tashkurgan and the Pamirs. The city presents a very busy appearance at this juncture, the bazaar full of military, and every forge occupied by cavalry soldiers getting their horses shod. The messenger I sent to Kashgar, on the sixth instant, returned to day bringing me a letter from Mr. Petrovsky, the Russian Consul, about Major Roche's Russian passport, also one from Prince Galitzin, and one from Captain Picot, both of whom are going to Russia by Semipalatinsk and Siberia, owing to the cholera, which, according to them, is very prevalent on the route by Samarkand.

One of these letters corroborates the news of the Tashkend affair, saying that the people stoned the Lieutenant-Governor, and the Russian troops fired on the rioters. Immediately following this Tashkend rising, it appears there were cholera riots at Astrakhan, where the populace, who were incensed at some stringent rules

enforced by the sanitary commissioners and the doctors, broke into the cholera hospitals and murdered many of the medical men in charge. A few managed to escape, being conveyed out of the town in some of the empty coffins belonging to the hospital; but unfortunately they were seen by some of the country people as they emerged from them, and it then got about that people were being buried alive, and had been seen breaking out of their coffins. This enraged the populace still more, and an indiscriminate slaughter of doctors, sanitary inspectors, and commissioners, took place.

A well-known merchant and trader from Badakshan, who trades with Yarkand and south as far as the Punjab, called Gada Mahammad, was arrested not long ago by the Russians, and accused of being an English spy. His goods and baggage underwent a severe scrutiny, and he was detained eight days at Khokand, but finally released, as there was nothing of a suspicious nature found on him.

* * * * * *

This being our last day in Yarkand, we had all our friends to tea and fruit again, and after making them a little speech, which Ahmed Din rendered in Persian for them, thanking them for their kindness and hospitality, we invested each with a robe of honour. There were seven of them, including my friend and historian, the late Amir's cavalry commander, Haji

Niaz. No sooner had they all departed, than our nine Panamik coolies and pony-boys struck, actually refusing to go with us to the Pamirs. So we dismissed two, that we did not consider hard-working enough, and replaced them with two good Arghoons,* who happened to be in Yarkand, and the other seven recalcitrant coolies have got to come with us whether they like it or not, as we simply take them by force, and they cannot desert on the march, as they would not know where to go, nor can they speak a word of Turki, and if they attempt to leave our camp, in the Pamirs, they will simply perish.

Since we have been in Yarkand, one of our men has taken small-pox, of which it appears there is a great deal going about, so we shall have to leave him behind, with another man to look after him.

Had a parade this afternoon of all the ponies to see that they had been re-shod properly. They look all the better for their fortnight's rest on the grass. As we were coming back to the house, one of the men rushed up to tell us they had found an extraordinary animal in our garden, but they dared not touch it. When we went to see this rare zoological specimen, it turned out to be no less than the common, or garden hedgehog. Whether it is common in this part of Asia I know not, but our men declared such an animal was unknown in their country.

* An Arghoon is half Yarkandi and half Ladaki.

The Pathan, accompanied by his four monkeys, came to bid us good-bye; the poor fellow was very grateful to us for having brought him with us from Panamik.

After a heavy day's packing, we sat down to the last dinner in our little verandah, everything being in readiness for our departure on the morrow. Minimum temperature, 54°.

August 17th.—We took leave of our kind friends, the merchants, who all came to our house to say good-bye. Some remained, meaning to ride with us part of the way. At about twelve noon all was ready for a start, so, accompanied by Sayad Dost Mahammad, Haji Niaz, and about six others, we rode out of the city passing the late Amir's palace now in ruins, and pointing our horses' heads for Tashkurgan, felt very glad we were once more on the march. We pitched our tents in a meadow full of mosquitoes, near a large garden, the proprietor of which wanted us very much to camp inside his walls, but although he gave us excellent peaches and grapes, we discovered smells in different parts of the garden which we thought best to avoid, so we declined the offer. After giving a parting cup of tea to Sayad Dost Mahammad, Haji Niaz, and Haji Rahim Jan, our late landlord, they bade us adieu and rode back to Yarkand. Minimum temperature, 57°.

August 18th.—Last night was a very disturbed one, and it was almost impossible to get any sleep. The

mosquitoes were bad enough, but the coolies were worse. They sang choruses all night, and, as they were inside the garden walls, we could not get at them to put a stop to their untuneful revelry. Then at about 2 A.M. some one tumbled over my tent-ropes, whereupon followed a scuffle and a string of naughty swear words in good strong Saxon, accompanied by the noise of a stick falling with a whack on the person of some luckless individual that had incurred the wrath of the Major; then all was peaceful for a time, and I remember no more until I was awoke by feeling a cold damp thing on my face, and this was Poskee's nose (our tame sheep). He had come into my tent to be fed. When up and about I went into Roche's tent to inquire into the circumstances of the fracas in the night, and it appeared that he heard some voices whispering between our two tents, and thinking it might be some loose-wallahs (thieves), had run out with a stick to thrash them; the men, seeing his intention and recognising by his tone of voice that the words he was using were not complimentary, took to their heels, tumbling over my tent-ropes in their endeavours to escape. He caught one, and after administering to him a good castigation, went back to his bed and well-earned repose.*

* It afterwards transpired that the men were sent by the master of the house to act as chokidars (watchmen), to see that we were all safe, the proprietor himself accompanying them, and Roche very much fears that it was himself whom he caught and thrashed.

We had to delay our start a little while, to allow the tents to dry, for it had been raining in the early morning, which was a great boon, as it laid the dust in the little desert we had to traverse. It was only five miles across, and lay between the cultivated land of the Yarkand valley and a fringe of cultivation which bordered the big desert we were to cross on the morrow, which rejoices in the name of "Shaitan Kum," or "The place in which the Devil himself could not find his way." One of the last houses we passed in the fertile district was the abode of the late Amir of Hunza's twenty-two wives, who live there and mourn the incarceration of their lord and master, Sufter Ali Khan, in a Chinese prison at Urumtchi, where he will most probably end his days, the Chinese Government having been very much incensed with him for fighting the English at Gilgit, in December 1891. He has been deprived of his Principality, which used to pay tribute to China, but has now been tacked on to the dominions of the Maharajah of Kashmir by the British Government.

About 5 P.M. we came to a Chinese fort, just on the edge of the desert of Shaitan Kum, which rises about fifty feet from the level of the cultivated plain that borders it. On this elevated ridge stand two very curious large watch-towers, built in the early part of the century by the Chinese as look-outs to watch the Kirghiz, who infested the neighbourhood, attacking all Chinese caravans bringing provisions from Yarkand

to the fort, and killing the soldiers in charge. Two men used to be put in each watch-tower every day to keep a look-out.

The name of the place is Yakarik, and it contains the last houses we shall see for some time to come. Just as we were putting up our tents, a severe sand-storm came down upon us from the desert, without the slightest warning, darkening the air and bending the poplar trees that surround the fort, until we thought they would either break in half or be uprooted. We took refuge in the fort till it was over, for it only lasted about an hour. During the time we were sheltering, a Chinese lancer rode in; he belonged to the Kargalik force, which was two days' march a head of us, and had been after a deserter whom he failed to capture. That night again we had an awful time, owing to the mosquitoes, in fact, they fairly drove us away from dinner. They came simply in thousands, and were accompanied by myriads of gnats, who got into our eyes, ears, noses, and mouths, to say nothing of the soup, and they actually put out our candle-lamps by falling on to the wicks in such thousands that the flame could not burn. We had three or four smudges made, the smoke from which nearly blinded us and quite choked us, so the remedy being nearly as bad as the disease, we shut ourselves up in our tents in the dark and went to bed dinnerless. Minimum temperature, 61°. Altitude, 4630 feet.

August 19*th.*—More Chinese lancers arrived this morning and we examined their arms and accoutrements. Their lance-shafts were painted red, and the pennon was of the same colour, and in place of carbines they had old-fashioned breech-loading short repeating rifles. Roche took a couple of photos of the fort and two watch-towers, after which we made a start, and passing between them found ourselves in the "Shaitan Kum," through which we rode all day. It was very hot, the sky being cloudless and there was not a drop of water nor an atom of shade the size of a man's hand in which to eat our midday meal. So we took what shade we could get by sitting close to our new horses, "Agha" and "Dost Mahammad," the gift of the Yarkand merchant, after whom we have named them.

We passed several of the Chinese cavalry horses lying dead, and very unsavoury they were, when by chance we happened to get to leeward of them. In the afternoon we reached a very curious part of this dreary waste, across the sands of which very few white men, with the exception of Cumberland, Bower, and Younghusband, have hitherto journeyed. It was exactly like riding through a mountainous country in miniature; little white stony hills not more than fifty feet high, but perfect in outline, and in every detail resembling real mountains, with miniature precipices, corries, valleys, and dry watercourses, and when we reached any elevation, we looked over range upon range of

these Liliputian Himalayas. At last we crossed a miniature pass and gradually descended until we found ourselves in another large desert plain, that stretched north as far as the eye could reach. Our course, however, was due west up a broad ravine, called Myak Jilga, up which we rode in a dry watercourse large enough to contain the Thames at London Bridge, and when I asked Mahammad Ahmin if it was ever full of water, he said it was sometimes quite a large stream that ran north and joined the Kashgar river, and on again asking him when the rainy season occurred in these parts, he replied, "There is no fixed time for it, only when Allah orders it." So with this valuable piece of meteorological information I was fain to be content.

By this time the sun was casting long shadows on the plain over which our caravan had been labouring, for both men and horses were out of condition, owing to their fortnight's rest at Yarkand, and both were beginning to suffer from thirst after ten hours hard marching, and we had finished the small amount of water we carried with us, with which to make our tea for the midday meal. So we were very glad to find a puddle which gave indications of the presence of water in the ravine which we had just entered from the desert, and after half an hour's search we came upon running water, which bubbling up every here and there gave us to believe that there was a river running under-ground, a way that many rivers have in these parts. Not

unfrequently we have gone a mile and more without coming upon a drop of water, and then all of a sudden have found a running stream, which came out from the stony bed for a few yards and then disappeared, apparently into the bowels of the earth. We thought to pitch our tents here, as the baggage-animals and men were about done, but we could not find a square yard of ground fit for camping purposes, so rocky was this ravine.

We were now evidently entering a real mountainous country again, which pleased us much, as we were dead sick of the plains of Turkestan. We could see high peaks in front of us, although on each side we were shut in by high, red sand-stone cliffs, the sides of which resembled the Gothic buttresses of a cathedral, the top of these quaint rocks taking every sort of fantastic shape and form. It was now beginning to get darkish, and yet we could not find a spot for a camp, but Mahammad Ahmin raised our hopes when he informed us he knew of a beautiful place for a camp about five minutes' ride up the ravine. These people have absolutely no notion of time or distance. If one asks a man how far it is from, say, Kargalik to Yarkand, he will reply by saying it is not quite so far as from Kashgar to some other place. In this instance Mahammad Ahmin's five minutes turned out to be fifty, and as we march on an average three and a half miles an hour, we went considerably over three miles before we reached this haven of rest, to which we were all looking forward. So imagine our

disgust on arriving there to find a Chinese regiment had camped at that spot the night before, and amongst their filthy remains was another dead horse, in the first stage of decomposition, close to the water.

Onward still was the cry although the short twilight was over, and by the time we found a suitable spot up stream it was pitch dark. To light lanterns and pitch tents was the next order, but, lo and behold, out of seven lanterns that we brought from Kashmir with us, there was but one left; all the others had been smashed in the different encounters the baggage had had with the rocks in the different passes, except two, which had been washed away in crossing some of the swollen rivers. So we practically pitched the camp in the dark, getting the tents up by 10.30 P.M.

When we came "to call the roll," seven men were absent. This was rather serious, for not a man of our caravan had ever been this way before, and as it was pitch dark, it was as likely as not they would lose their way. However, at 11.30, five of them came in, saying they had left two of the Panamik coolies a long way behind. At 12.30 (midnight) dinner was put on the table, the cook and subhana having been amongst the stragglers, but we had been so long without food that we could not eat. At 1 A.M., as the coolies had not appeared, we sent off a search party, armed with our one lantern, six spare candles, one box of matches, and some chupatties. They found the wretched creatures

faint from hunger and thirst and unable to struggle on any longer, having lost their way as well. They were brought into the camp about 3 A.M. very much the worse for having been on their legs for twenty hours without food or water. Minimum temperature, 59°. Altitude, 7080 feet.

August 20th.—After our thirty-two miles march yesterday, which the ponies stood wonderfully well, considering they had just come off the grass, we determined to do a short march of sixteen miles to-day. Just before leaving our camping-ground, which by the way was called Yelghuz Toghrak, more Chinese cavalry passed up the ravine, amongst whom was an officer evidently of high rank. This turned out to be the military Amban of Yangi Hissar, near Kashgar; I happened to be strolling up the glen, shooting chikore when he passed, and he was much interested in the sport and stopped his horse to look on. A chikore came rocketting over head and I dropped it close to him, which seemed to surprise him much, and he looked with astonishment at my gun which could kill birds flying in the air, as a Chinaman can only understand killing a thing sitting on the ground.

When the caravan caught me up, we travelled for about nine miles up this same ravine, until we came to a very high narrow gorge with enormous rocks thrown about in the wildest confusion. It seemed impossible that our horses could get through this defile, where the

rocks in some places did not leave space enough for a man on horseback to pass through. It was a very grand picture. These great black precipitous cliffs rising 1500 feet, sheer up from the little stream that flowed down the pass, their tops seeming almost to meet, so little of the sky was there to be seen above. We had to walk and lead our horses and pick our way as best we could, for there was no track. How on earth the Chinese ever got their cavalry through this defile I cannot understand. We had to unload all the ponies and carry the baggage on the men's backs. This defile was six miles long, but it was only in one place that the ponies had to be unloaded. At last we emerged from this curious passage and found ourselves in a comparatively open country again. The ascent from the commencement of the gorge to the top was 2300 feet.

At Gunjad we found a few Chinese soldiers, and seeing there was grass for the ponies and good water, we halted there, having done only seventeen miles to-day. We met a Beg on his way back to Kargalik from Tashkurgan, and the last shave they had there from the Pamirs beat the record. It was to the effect that the Russian Commander on the Pamirs had sent a message to the Chinese officer commanding at Tashkurgan, ordering him to evacuate the place with all his troops. Of course we do not credit this rumour in the least. Minimum temperature, 44°. Altitude, 8930 feet.

August 21st.—Our intention to-day was to march to a place which our guide Mahammad Ahmin said was about four potais (a potai is two and a half miles) from Gunjad, there to camp and fill up mussocks with water for the big march the next day, and also to rest our men and animals, so that they should be fit for the march into Sariq-qol, which according to Mahammad Ahmin was a very formidable affair, thirty miles over three passes, and down a precipice, "worse than any in Asia," and not a blade of grass or a drop of water the whole way. In consequence of to-day's prospective march being computed at only ten miles, we took it easy and did not hurry the start.

About ten o'clock Roche and I mounted our horses and rode slowly up the ravine, the cook and his ponies having started half an hour before us. After riding for about one mile and a half, we suddenly came upon Rassoul and his ponies halted, and on making inquiry we found that Mahammad Ahmin had made a most grievous error, and that the place he said was ten miles off, turned out to be this place where Rassoul the cook was halted, and sure enough the water did stop there, for Roche and I rode for a long way up the nullah and there was not a drop more to be seen. Some Kirghiz also that we met said there was no water this side of the big hills, except where we had left the cook. So we were nicely done. A whole day wasted in travelling one and a half miles, for we could not continue on at

that late hour. It was a case of getting up next morning at 3 A.M. and starting at 4 A.M. to face the march into Sariq-qol to cross the three passes and negotiate that precipice, for which we wanted all our daylight, as the evenings are beginning to close in very fast. So there was nothing to be done but to call a halt and give every one a good rest to prepare for the fatigues of the morrow, and as we were determined to be off early, Roche and I did not have our tents pitched, so that there should be no delay in the morning.

Several Chinese soldiers passed up the nullah, but what they are going to do for water, they know best themselves. Minimum temperature, 47°. Altitude 9380 feet.

August 22*nd*.—Rose at 3.30 A.M. We had slept under a water-proof sheet stretched over two sticks and a rope, and by 4.30 A.M. we had swallowed a cup of tea and an egg and were ready to start. It was pitch dark, but we got off well and rode up the nullah passing the Chinese soldiers, who had got no farther than we had after all, for finding no water, they had returned. After riding for about two hours due west, we suddenly left the nullah and headed due south, following the dry bed of a little river, with all its twists and turns, through a small mountainous country, something like the miniature hills I described in the Shaitan Kum on the 19th. We were at an altitude of 9380 feet in the ravine, and when we

got to the first pass we had gone up 1100 feet, the altitude of the pass being 10,480 feet. We dismounted, as it was a steep descent, and walking led our horses down the hill for five miles, at which point we commenced to ascend again. The country being just the same, yellow hills with a strong-smelling herb growing on them, in straight lines, exactly as if they had been planted in rows, or sown with a drill machine.

By this time we thought it was time for a halt, as we had been *en route* for seven hours, so we had a mouthful of breakfast, taking the altitude, 9130 feet, and then proceeded until we reached pass No. 2, called the Kara Dawan, or Black pass, 9590 feet, and when we stood on the summit and looked down straight in front of us, we saw a sight which is as absolutely impossible to describe, as it was impossible to draw. It was certainly more curious than beautiful, and more strikingly grand than either. Nothing that we have seen in the last four months has been the least like it. It literally struck us dumb with astonishment, simply because until we had set our eyes on it we did not know that such a place or sight could exist in the world. We were on the top of a pass only 9500 feet above the sea-level and yet the far distant mountains looked as if they were higher than any in the Himalayas. Their peaks seemed to lose themselves up in the sky. We appeared to be able to see about 10,000 feet of their precipitous sides above the mist that floated over the countless masses of

hills that lay between us and them. We counted thirteen distinct ranges between us and the mist that enveloped the tops of the far ranges and the base of the big mountains. Every one of these thirteen ranges was quite distinct, even through the haze we could see all their different shapes and jagged peaks or rounded tops, ravines, rocks, precipitous watercourses, and all this seemed to be contained in one gigantic basin, surrounded on three sides by these tremendously high hills.

There can be no doubt that had it been quite clear and bright, the picture would have been less astounding and more comprehensible, for I think there must have been a great deal of optical delusion in the sight as we saw it, first of all owing to our position on the summit of the pass, and secondly, because the haze increased the indefiniteness. For mist not only appeals a great deal to the imagination, but has a way of making things look twice as large as they really are, and also of making things which are quite close and only of an ordinary size, appear to be miles off and enormous.

Anyhow, it took our breath away when we came upon the scene without any warning, for as we were nearing the top of the pass we could see nothing in front of us, and so imagined we were about to descend on to some plains again, and in fact had quite made up our minds to that effect; so our astonishment at being brought suddenly face to face with this extraordinary panorama may be well imagined. The descent

of 2500 feet was very steep and long, and we had to walk and lead the horses until we reached the bottom and rode down a very large broad watercourse, dry like all are hereabouts. The slaty shale over which we travelled being nearly black, showed plainly the presence of coal and iron in large quantities, especially as the sides of the hills were streaked with veins of those valuable minerals, small pieces of which lay scattered all over the ravine.

All of a sudden our progress was arrested by seeing in front of us a seemingly absolute blank. There was nothing between us and the far hill but an abyss. On each side of the ravine the hills came to an end, and the watercourse, now no longer dry, also terminated at a large smooth flat white marble rock flush with the bottom of the ravine. We dismounted, seeing some Chinese soldiers lying down who signed to us not to advance any further, and peering over this white marble termination to our path, looked straight down an abyss some 500 feet deep. This was the top of a waterfall, and the only way down this frightful-looking precipice was by a track cut in the rocks to the right of it. No wonder Mahammad Ahmin said it was the worst precipice in Asia. I could not have believed, had I not seen it with my own eyes, that any animal could have got down it alive. As it was the Chinese lost some of their horses there yesterday going down, and we saw them lying dead amongst the rocks at the bottom.

We had an awful time with our ponies—sixty of them now with our two new horses, and two extra mounted men, whom the Chinese authorities sent us as guides. And yet fortune favoured us again, for we did not lose one, nor had we even a broken limb amongst the whole lot. The way we managed it was this: The ponies were relieved of their loads and were brought down one by one, two men held them by their heads, and two ropes were tied round their necks, the ends of which two other men held in their hands from behind, and a fifth man held on tight by the animal's tail. In this way they were lowered down this awful place, in which there was sometimes a fall of four to six feet from one rock to another. One false step and over they were bound to go, like the poor Chinese cavalry horses, and leave their bones to be picked by the eagles, a very fine specimen of which was watching their descent, wheeling round and round in the air above this abyss, thinking no doubt that one out of such a lot was sure to come to grief, when his turn would come.

Thus by dint of most careful management, that reflects the greatest credit on our caravan men, were all the ponies brought down, one by one, at the risk not only of *their* lives but those of the men also, for had one of the animals gone over the precipice it would probably have dragged one out of the five men over with it. Then after the ponies were all safe at the bottom, these cheery and willing fellows ascended again, and not the

least wonderful part of the whole performance was their coming down this fearsome place, sometimes carrying, sometimes lowering with ropes the heavy yak-dans without any accident. When we got to the bottom we went to look at the waterfall and were astonished to find the water brackish—in fact very nearly salt. From the base of the precipice we rode about two miles down a broad ravine until we opened up a fine valley running north-east and south-west, with a strong stream flowing through it called the Kiaz river.

We were glad to see some trees, and pitched our tents under the shade of some very old poplars on the right bank of the river, in which I had a bath before dinner.

On thinking over the events of the day, it struck us both as almost incomprehensible that a nation like the Chinese, who are not wanting in common sense, should allow such a place as the above-mentioned pass to remain in the state it is now, seeing that it is the only highway between their most important military frontier, the Pamirs, their most important military centre Tashkurgan, and their base, Yarkand. I should say they are beginning to find out their mistake already, since the despatch of the few hundred men sent by that route; but what will it be when these 5000 men, that we hear so much about, come from Aksu, and worse still, if they have to bring artillery up with them? In the present state of that pass, and in the event of a war with Russia, the latter Power, by

putting a few arms of precision into the hands of a score of Kirghiz marksmen, with plenty of ammunition, could keep a whole army corps from advancing, and could effectually cut off the whole of the Chinese supplies as well as their reinforcements.

It will cost the Chinese a large sum to make a zigzag road there, but it will cost them a great deal more money in the end if they fail to do so.

A Kirghiz straight from the Pamirs came into camp in the evening, and he declares the rumour about the Russians ordering the Chinese to evacuate Tashkurgan to be quite true. Anyhow it will not be long now before we are there to see and hear for ourselves, for this week should find us in the "Stone Fort" (Tashkurgan). Minimum Temperature, 63°. Altitude, 7020 feet.

END OF VOL. I.

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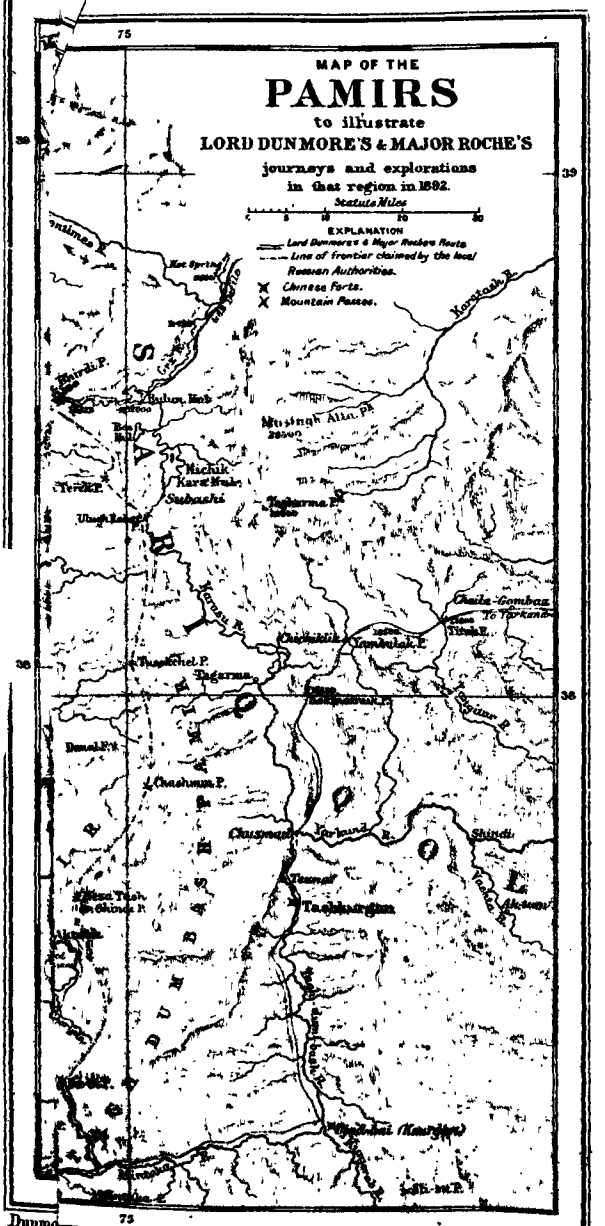
MAP OF THE
PAMIRS
to illustrate
LORD DUNMORE'S & MAJOR ROCHE'S
journeys and explorations
in that region in 1892.
Statute Miles
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Lord Dunmore's & Major Roche's Route.
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Tagharma
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Chashman P.
Chashman
Yarkand R.
Shindi
Tashkurgan
Yarkand (Maralbashi)
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KARAKUL
RANGKUL PAMIR
Kudara Plain
Victoria Lake
Yashil Kul
Zor Kul
Rang Kul
Little Kara Kul
Chakmaktin Pass
Kizil Art Pass
Tagharma Pass
Kizil Art Pass
Tashkurgan
Sarikol Range
Sarikol Range
Hindu Kush
Hindu Kush
Hindu Kush

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